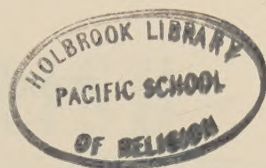


WORLD PARISH



AUGUST, 1959



SUSANNA WESLEY

Portrait by Frank O. Salisbury in the World Methodist Building at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, U.S.A.

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WORLD PARISH

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AGENDA

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES

Saint Simon's Island, Georgia, U.S.A.

September 8-12, 1959

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PRELIMINARY MEETINGS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

- 9:00 A.M. Executive Committee, American Association of Methodist Historical Societies
Bishop William C. Martin, Chairman
- 2:00 P.M. Executive Committee, Section XIII, World Methodist Council.
Bishop Paul E. Martin, Chairman
- 5:00 P.M. Committee Meetings, World Methodist Council
Finance Committee, Mr. Edwin L. Jones
Program Committee, Dr. T. Otto Nall and Dr. E. Benson Perkins
- 8:00 P.M. Committee Meetings, Continued

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

- 9:00 A.M. Executive Committee, World Methodist Council
Dr. Harold Roberts, President
Roll Call
Memorials
Presentation of Minutes
Introductions and Announcements
Appointment of Session Committees
Presidential Address
Reports of Secretaries
- 2:30 P.M. Reports on Regional Conferences
North American Sections, December, 1958, Dr. Elmer T. Clark

European Youth Conference, January, 1959, Rev. Wilfred Wade
South African Regional Conference, April, 1959, Dr. E. Benson Perkins
European Consultative Conference, June, 1959, Bishop Friedrich Wunderlich
Reports of Sections

8:00 P.M. Tenth World Methodist Conference, Oslo, 1961.
Report by Bishop Odd Hagen.
General Arrangements
Finance
Procedure
Program

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

9:00 A.M. Union Schemes and Conversations
Great Britain, Dr. Harold Roberts, Prof. Victor Murray
Ceylon
North India and Pakistan
Northern Rhodesia, Dr. E. Benson Perkins

2:30 P.M. Union Schemes in America, Bishop Frederick B. Newell, Bishop R. H. Mueller, Evangelical United Brethren Church.
Closer Union of World Methodism, Mr. Charles C. Parlin
Nationalism and Church Union, Dr. Ernest E. Long, Rev. Wilfred Wade

8:00 P.M. Reports of Committees
Finance Committee: World Central Fund, Mr. Edwin L. Jones
Oxford Memorial Committee, Dr. Dow Kirkpatrick
Committee on Faith and Order, Bishop Ivan Lee Holt
Committee on Exchange of Preachers, Dr. T. Otto Nall, Dr. A. Stanley Leyland

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

9:00 A.M. Report of Committee on Publications, Dr. T. Otto Nall
Future Secretarial Policy, Dr. Harold Roberts, Bishop Paul E. Martin
History of Methodism
British, Rev. Rupert E. Davies
American, Dr. Emory S. Bucke, Mr. Cecil D. Jones

2:30 P.M. Message to the Churches
Epworth Old Rectory and Asbury House, Dr. E. Benson Perkins
World Denominational Conference, Dr. Elmer T. Clark
World Council of Churches, Dr. Eric W. Baker
Appointments

7:00 P.M. Dinner in Recognition of Bishop Ivan Lee Holt's Fiftieth Anniversary in the Ministry, Bishop Arthur J. Moore, presiding.

9:00 P.M. World Federation of Methodist Women, Mrs. T. Otto Nall, Dr. Dorothy Farrar.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

9:00 A.M. World Executive Committee, Zurich, Switzerland, August 3-7, 1960.

Miscellaneous Business

1:00 P.M. Tour of Historical Spots related to the Wesleys in Savannah, led by Bishop Arthur J. Moore and Dr. Anthony Hearn.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Preaching in the Churches by Members of the Executive Committee

SAINT SIMON'S ISLAND

September 8-12, 1959

The Executive Committee of the World Methodist Council will meet at Epworth-by-the-Sea on Saint Simons Island in Georgia, U.S.A., on September 8-12, 1959. The Executive Committees of Section XIII and of the American Association of Methodist Historical Societies will meet on the first day. The detailed program will be found in the following pages herein.

Saint Simons Island is eight miles south of Savannah and is well known in Methodist history. There the town of Frederica was laid out in 1735 by Charles Wesley, General Oglethorpe, and Benjamin Ingham. There was fought the Battle of Bloody Marsh in which Oglethorpe broke the Spanish power in the American colonies. Across the Frederica River are the Marshes of Glynn, made famous by Sydney Lanier's poem under that title.

Both John and Charles Wesley preached on Saint Simons Island. There are five Frederica Journals in Curnock's standard edition of John Wesley's Journal. On the island Wesley courted Sophy Hopkey, was embroiled along with Charles and Oglethorpe with two female hell-cats, and was told that the people never before heard of such a religion as he preached and would never hear him again. It can all be read in his Journal.

Today the southern tip of the romantic island is the year-round assembly ground of the South Georgia Annual Conference. Memorials of the Wesleys are found at various spots in the area. There is the ruin of old Fort Frederica, which Oglethorpe built but which was never under fire. There is a magnificent auditorium, a chapel, two apartment houses, and several new residences.

Epworth-by-the-Sea lies across the river from Brunswick, Georgia, to which point travellers by train or automobile should proceed. Those who travel by air should go to Savannah, from which point there is frequent coach service to Brunswick. A Delta Airlines plane flies from

Savannah direct to Saint Simons Island in the morning and late afternoon, reaching the destination in thirty-five minutes.

Persons desiring reservations for the September meetings should write their requirements to Dr. Elmer T. Clark, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, giving the arrival date and all details. Or they may write to the Superintendent, the Rev. Frank Nalls, Box 338, Saint Simons Island, Georgia.



Irregular Back Row, left to right: Rev. Frank Edmunds, Rev. Kenneth Johnson, Rev. C. Edgar Wilkinson, Bishop Ralph Dodge, Rev. Jesse Lawrence, Rev. W. J. Rusike, Miss M. M. Baker, Dr. M. E. Culver, Rev. Alf Helgisson.
Second Row: Mr. H. W. Haley, Mrs. Haley, Dr. J. B. Webb, Mrs. W. F. Ball, Bishop W. F. Ball, Bishop Francis H. Gow, Dr. W. F. Nkomo, Mr. Jasper Machiri, Rev. E. E. Mahabane.
Front Row: Mr. Matthew Wakatama, Rev. F. B. Rea, Rev. Eric A. Reed, Dr. E. Benson Perkins, Rev. J. Chitombo, Rev. M. Malyenkuku, Rev. Enoch Musu, Rev. Douglas Thompson, Rev. S. K. Makumba.

SOUTH AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE

Following precedents in Europe, a South Africa Regional Conference of the World Methodist Council was held at Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, April 7-12, 1959. Five Methodist bodies were represented and representatives of the Free Methodist Church were unable to attend. Around thirty-five delegates were present.

Dr. J. B. Webb of Johannesburg, a vice-president of the World Methodist Council, was Chairman, and the official delegate of the Council was Dr. E. Benson Perkins, Joint Secretary, of Birmingham, England.

The Conference adopted the following as its official statement.

CONFERENCE FINDINGS

THE FIELD WE COVER

The following five branches of the Methodist Church were represented at the Southern African Regional Conference of the World Methodist Council:

The Southern and Northern Rhodesia Districts of the Methodist Church (U.K.)

The Conferences of the Methodist Church (U.S.A.) in Rhodesia, Mozambique and South Africa.

The United Church of Canada.

The Conferences of the African Methodist Episcopal Church.

The South African Methodist Church.

Owing to unforeseen circumstances, the Free Methodist Church representatives were unable to attend. From the survey it has been found that in some areas there is a considerable amount of over-lapping which we hope can be eliminated in the course of time.

We recommend that within a given area where there is more than one branch of the Methodist Church there should be a Joint Council for consultation, especially before the opening of any new churches.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LAITY

We note with pleasure the work of training the laity in South Africa and that which will be undertaken at the Old Umtali Biblical Institute. However, we recommend that the existing schemes of training be extended in the rural areas where there is such a big need. We appreciate the value and strength of the lay organizations within the church. We feel it should be our aim to encourage mature Christian witness in the secular world.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Preamble:

This Conference accepts that the organic union of the different branches of Methodism should be the goal of the Methodist Churches in any given area. Towards that end we ought to promote a spirit of close co-operation and fellowship. The closer drawing together of the branches of the Methodist Church need in no way conflict with the establishment of similar co-operation with other branches of the Christian Church.

1. The Conference agrees that after a period of two years a second Regional Conference of this kind be held, and that meanwhile church leaders on the territorial and local levels, where possible, have consultation leading up to the larger Conference. (See Par. 4)

2. The Conference recommends that congregations and organizations of the various branches of the Methodist Church interchange speakers for the better understanding of one another and of our work.

3. The Conference agrees that a pamphlet giving information about the various Methodist Churches that work in Southern Africa be prepared under the auspices of the World Methodist Council. This should be distributed among Ministers and Lay Leaders throughout these branches with

a view to greater understanding of one another and of one another's work and our common objectives.

4. The Conference agrees that two action committees be set up, one to cover the Union of South Africa, Portuguese East Africa, Swaziland, Basutoland and South Bechuanaland, and the other the Federation, Angola, the Congo, Kenya, Tanganyika and North Bechuanaland, to carry through the recommendations of this Conference and that each action committee be composed of two nominees appointed by each Methodist branch in the area.

5. The Conference appoints Dr. J. B. Webb as the liaison officer between these action committees and the World Methodist Council, and as their initial ex-officio convener.

TRAINING THE MINISTRY

This Conference is aware of the necessity to promote ministerial training on a continuing scale of higher standards. The recruitment of the ministry should be a matter of increased concern and it should be related to the economics involved.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

We affirm the value of corporate discipline which the church exercises over the individual member; however, the church needs to keep aware of a balance in the exercise of this discipline and the positive habits of self-discipline should be stressed. There are two aims to be emphasized in Church discipline, the one to draw men toward the Church and Christian life rather than away from it, and secondly, that men are to be helped to be personally responsible as they walk in the Spirit.

Rules of Discipline should be regarded as living codes and, therefore, subject to the development of Christian maturity in any given community.

We recognize the difficulty of transcending the boundaries of the various churches with a unified discipline, but regard conversation between the churches as of great value.

CONSIDERATIONS ON EDUCATION IN RELATION TO THE STATE

1. While this Conference recognizes the responsibility of the State in Education it would deplore any possible exclusion of the Church from participation in this field. It asserts that it must have continued participation in the training of Christian teachers with State financial assistance, even though its direct responsibility for the actual running of schools may not always be insisted upon.

- a) The basis of such education must be the aim to give equal opportunity to all children at all levels of education to the utmost of their abilities irrespective of race, wealth or creed.
 - b) Religious training must be an integral part of such education.
 - c) The Christian Church must have an effective part in the planning of the programme of religious training through all schools and in supervising its administration.
 - d) No preferential treatment should be given to private schools or to particular denominations.
2. The Conference welcomes the establishment of an open University

College in the Federation; it cannot but deplore the reversal of this policy in the legislation of the Union Parliament affecting University Education in South Africa.

LITERATURE

This Conference considers afresh its concern for the unfinished task in literacy. We reaffirm our responsibility to provide a literature that will appeal to the awakened minds of those whom we have taught to read.

Christianity has the power to mould the character of the continent. Let us launch out on a renewed campaign for the minds of men through the printed word.

THE CHURCH IN RELATION TO SOCIAL AND POLITICAL QUESTIONS

The Church has the right to raise a prophetic voice in regard to race, and politics and social welfare. Where human rights are challenged, where equality as citizens is not the realized privilege of all, where opportunities are denied to responsible people, the Church must champion the cause of the oppressed. We reaffirm our concern for all the aspirations of man that we consider just and holy and for the uplift of all.

CALL FOR THE OBSERVANCE OF THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

Whereas, The Methodist Church in America was formally organized at a conference of ministers meeting in Lovely Lane Chapel, Baltimore, Maryland, during the Christmas season of 1784 at which time Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke were chosen as our first bishops; plans were made for the founding of our first college; the work of our Methodist Book Concern was begun; and the foundations of our ecclesiastical structure were carefully and prayerfully laid; and

Whereas, across the intervening years Methodism in the United States has been blessed with a vast company of devoted preachers and laymen, some of them persons of great prominence, and many more of them persons living their lives and doing their work in quiet and sometimes out-of-the-way places who have written many chapters of splendid Kingdom achievement under the blessing of Almighty God; and

Whereas, December 1959, will represent the completion of the first one hundred seventy-five years of organized Methodist work in this country;

Be it therefore resolved, That we, the Council of Bishops, hereby call upon our local churches to observe with appropriate ceremonies the

week beginning December 27 as the anniversary of the organization of The Methodist Church in the United States.

We call to the attention of our people the special anniversary number of *Together* scheduled for November 1959, and urge for it the widest possible distribution.

We further recommend that arrangements be made for an appropriate celebration of a nation-wide character in Baltimore, Maryland, during the Christmas season of 1959.

Anniversary Observance Committee

BISHOP WILLIAM C. MARTIN

BISHOP W. ANGIE SMITH

BISHOP ROY H. SHORT

Miami Beach, Florida, April 30, 1959

Pursuant to the above call a meeting of various board representatives and others met at Nashville, Tennessee, on May 18, 1959, in the office of Bishop Roy H. Short. Representatives of the Boards of Evangelism and Education, the Association of Methodist Historical Societies, the pastor of Lovely Lane Church at Baltimore, Editor of *Together*, and Methodist Publishing House were present.

It was decided (1) that the Board of Evangelism should hold a great conference of younger preachers and their wives at Baltimore during the Christmas Season and (2) that a sub-committee of Bishops Short, Oxnam, and Love, Dr. Harry Denman, Dr. Leslie Ross, and Dr. Harry Spencer, with others to be added in Baltimore, should work out plans for public meetings at Baltimore other than the conference of younger ministers.

Dr. John R. Gross and Dr. Harry Denman were named to prepare a brochure which would provide information and directions for a week-long celebration in local churches.

Bishop Short was asked to contact the editors of *World Outlook*, secretaries of the Board of Missions and other boards with reference to their participation in the celebration. It was pointed out that the Christmas Conference in 1784 sent out the first missionaries.

Among the matters considered for the Baltimore meeting were (1) a television program on Christmas Eve, (2) special services in all churches on the evening of December 27, 1959, and (3) the preaching of numerous bishops in the Baltimore churches on Sunday, January 3, 1960.

WORLD CONFERENCE DELEGATES

The Council of Bishops of The Methodist Church, U.S.A., is appointing delegates to the Tenth World Methodist Conference at Oslo, Norway, in 1961. The appointments will be announced when the Council meets at Phoenix, Arizona, November 17-20, 1959.

In addition to the delegates so named there will be certain alternates,

Editors, and Executive Secretaries appointed by the committee of Section XIII and Youth and Women delegates selected by the committee after consultation with the proper organizations or boards.

All delegates regularly appointed will be provided with official credentials when they signify their acceptance and their intention to attend the conference.

All the other Sections of the World Methodist Council will also appoint delegates. The conference will meet in late August and September. American travel plans are being arranged by Thomas Cook and Son of New York.

AMERICAN METHODIST SHRINES

The General Conference of The Methodist Church, U.S.A., in 1956 instructed the Association of Methodist Historical Societies to prepare a report on what constitutes a Methodist shrine and what should be regarded as shrines. The action was prompted by applications for financial aid by churches on the ground that they are shrines of Methodism.

Dr. Elmer T. Clark, Executive Secretary of the Association, is conducting the study preparatory to the report. He recently visited several historic spots in Maryland and Delaware. These included Barratts' Chapel near Dover, Delaware, where Asbury and Coke met in 1784 and planned the Christmas Conference which formed the Methodist Episcopal Church; the Maryland home of Robert Strawbridge, regarded as the first Methodist preacher in America; the site of the log meeting house which Strawbridge erected in 1764; the home of John Evans, first convert and first member of Strawbridge's class; and the site of Cokesbury College, first Methodist college in the world.

The Strawbridge house, Barratt's Chapel, St. George's Church in Philadelphia, and John Street Church in New York were designated as shrines by the General Conference in 1940.

It is understood that the Association will recommend that six other spots be designated as shrines and a large number of other places be regarded as important historical landmarks. These will be indicated on a map which will be published in the special Christmas Conference edition of *Together* in October of this year.

ST. GEORGE'S IN NATIONAL PARK

The American Congress has enacted into law the bill, endorsed by the Association of Methodist Historical Societies, which incorporates the area surrounding old St. George's Methodist Church in the Independence Historical National Park. The act appropriates funds for slum clearance and beautification around the church but, of course, provides no money for the church itself. Under the terms of the law it must be maintained and operated as a religious organization.

LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

The library in the World Methodist Building at Lake Junaluska continues to acquire rare Wesleyana. Almost daily news items in the form of out-of-print books on Methodism are placed on the shelves.

Among the recent documents secured are the following autograph letters:

*John Wesley to unknown correspondent, December 31, 1761.

*John Wesley to Thomas Hanson, February 15, 1764.

John Wesley to Joseph Benson, November 5, 1769.

John Wesley to Hannah Ball, November 5, 1769.

John Wesley to John Fletcher, February 26, 1774.

John Wesley to Abraham Brames, January 16, 1780.

John Wesley to Ann Bolton, February 26, 1780.

*John Wesley to George Whitefield, September 15, 1788.

*John Wesley to John Rundell, August 29, 1789.

Francis Asbury to Mrs. John Dickins, September 12, 1801.

Philip Bruce to Mrs. John Dickins, September 12, 1801.

Nicholas Snethen to Mrs. John Dickins, September 12, 1801.

Countess of Huntingdon to an unknown correspondent, May 15, 1784.

Thomas Coke to Mr. Moulton, May 11, 1803.

The items starred are not in Telford's edition of *The Letters of John Wesley*.

THREE METHODIST WOMEN HONORED

Two American Methodist women intimately related to the World Methodist Council have been honored with the degree of Doctor of Letters by American colleges.

Mrs. Paul E. Martin, wife of the Chairman of the Executive Committee of Section XIII, received the degree from Hendrix College, Conway, Arkansas, and Mrs. T. Otto Nall, Vice-President for North America of the World Federation of Methodist Women, was similarly honored by Iowa Wesleyan College.

Mrs. Hazen G. Werner, wife of Bishop Werner, was awarded the degree of Doctor of Humanities by Ohio Northern University.

THE EARLIEST METHODISTS IN AMERICA

By ELMER T. CLARK

The mention of the origin of Methodism in this country has nearly always been an invitation to trouble, for the argument over the priority of Maryland or New York has been long and heated. Discretion bids one keep silent and avoid the brickbats, but takes courage here because these statements are well known and frequently cited.

In 1912 a Commission was set up to determine the matter. The members from New York would not participate, and the eighteen others submitted a report, supported by a 116-page book of evidence, entitled *The Origin of Methodism in America*, which declared that Robert Strawbridge began preaching on Sam's Creek in Maryland about 1761 and formed societies two or three years later, and that Philip Embury preached and formed a society in New York in 1766.

The New York members submitted a minority report and turned in a 94-page book of supporting argument, written by Dr. H. K. Carroll, entitled *The First Methodist Society in America*.

The General Conference of 1916 adopted neither, but printed the majority report in the *Journal*. Provision was made for another Commission to be composed entirely of jurists, but it seems that this group was never appointed.

So the matter stands to this day. No official decision has ever been made.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

Actually, the first preacher who was called a Methodist in the colonies was George Whitefield. John and Charles Wesley were here earlier, and while they had been dubbed Methodists at Oxford there is no record that they were so called in Georgia. Whitefield came in 1738, years before either Robert Strawbridge or Philip Embury appeared on the scene. He also came on six other occasions and preached in nearly all the colonies. He created a stir in Philadelphia, pro and con, and attracted the favorable attention of Benjamin Franklin; there he erected the New Building or Academy which later became the University of Pennsylvania, and his statue stands on its campus today. In 1745 Virginia authorized action against all itinerant preachers, including Methodists, twenty-years before Robert Williams preached what has been called the first Methodist sermon at Norfolk. In 1752 Samuel Davies complained to the Bishop of London that he was being "huddled promiscuously with the Methodists."

It has been said that Whitefield organized no societies, but that is not strictly true. Hallman, in his *The Garden of Methodism*, says that the first society formed in America was Whitefield's class at Lewes, Delaware, in 1739. It lapsed after three years and was resurrected by Free-born Garrettson. In 1740, 1741, and 1742, William Becket, Anglican missionary at Lewes, complained about Whitefield's group in letters to Governor Thomas and the Secretary of the London Missionary Society.

In 1765 Charles Woodmason, an Anglican itinerant in the Carolina back-country, wrote that Methodism had been introduced in South Carolina but had made no progress. He said "They run to hear Whitefield out of curiosity but will not adopt his principles." In 1767 he complained that his congregations in North Carolina were not larger because "a

Methodist has set up to read and preach;" he said the Methodists were "exceedingly low and ignorant persons who attract the lower classes." In the memoir of Joseph Everett in the *Minutes* of 1810 it is stated that "Whitefield travelled and preached through the country" after Everett, who was born in 1732, "became a married man."

It is historic fact, therefore, that there were people and preachers called Methodists in the colonies a quarter of a century before the accepted Maryland and New York dates.

STRAWBRIDGE AND MARYLAND

Proponents of Maryland present a formidable case. The main points, sometimes supported by documentary proof, are as follows: (1) Robert Strawbridge came to Maryland about 1761; (2) he began to preach as soon as he had "arranged his houses"; (3) he baptized Henry Maynard in 1762 or 1763; (4) he converted John Evans in 1763 or 1764, a point confirmed by a document written by his son and attested by his grandson; (5) he formed societies in 1763 or 1764; (6) in 1773 there were nearly twice as many Methodist members in Maryland as in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey combined, indicating that preachers had been working in Maryland for a longer period.

The most telling argument is the explicit statement of Francis Asbury himself. On May 5, 1801, he was in Maryland and wrote in his *Journal* "This settlement of Pipe Creek is the richest in the state: here Mr. Strawbridge formed the first society in Maryland- and *America*." The New York debaters had difficulty in explaining away the italicized statement of the man who knew most about the history, but they did it, to their own satisfaction.

Early Methodist historians were inclined to favor the priority of Embury and New York. This was true of Jesse Lee, Nathan Bangs, Leroy M. Lee, J. B. Wakeley, Abel Stevens, John Atkinson, James M. Buckley, John F. Hurst and some others who wrote before the arguments on both sides were published. There was not unanimity, however, for such historians as William Hamilton, George C. M. Roberts, John Lednam, Holland N. McTyeire, John J. Tigert, Mrs. Arthur Bibbins and others favored Strawbridge and Maryland.

Later historians have hesitated to take sides, although Strawbridge has won weighty support. For example, Dr. William Warren Sweet, most noted of all modern Methodist historians, declared positively: "Robert Strawbridge and Philip Embury were the first to come and through them the earliest Methodist classes in America were formed, the first by Strawbridge in Maryland, the second under Embury in New York City."

DID STRAWBRIDGE STEAL A HOG?

Now comes a discovery that many regard as a clincher in favor of Strawbridge.

In the court records of Frederick County, Maryland, in which the Sam's Creek region is located, under date of November, 1753, has been found a grand jury presentment against Robert Strawbridge "for philonesly stealing of a pigg the property of Elias Delashmitt." This is followed in June, 1754, by a record that the indictment was "after one Continuance Struck off. Defendant being Run away."

Now 1753 is eight years earlier than any other known record and if he began to preach "as soon as he had arranged his house," Strawbridge has an unassailable position of priority.

Those who have studied the record think that it was a case of religious persecution. Elias Delashmitt, who made the charge, seems to have been capable of false accusation. In 1750 he was before the court on the charge of operating a tipling house; later a judgment was awarded against him and his partner James Hook; in 1758 he was back in court charging Alexander Jones with trespass and apparently claiming one of Jones' slaves.

It is believed that Strawbridge simply crossed the Potomac River into the present Loudon County, Virginia. There the deed book shows that a lot was purchased on May 11, 1766 "for no other use but for a church or meeting house and grave yard." This was two years before the property was purchased in New York. This same lot was the site of the "Old Stone" Methodist Church at Leesburg, Virginia, until it was sold in 1902.

"There seems to be no other way to explain the origin of the Leesburg Society without Robert Strawbridge," says Melvin Steadman. "It is obvious that the Society was formed prior to 1766, for them to have sufficient strength to buy land and erect a meeting house shortly afterwards. . . . The Maryland record clearly shows that Strawbridge was in that Colony by 1753, and left there during the next year. . . . The connection between Strawbridge and Leesburg Methodism seems to have a real foundation in fact."

Does this, or does it not, clinch the case for the priority of Strawbridge over Embury?

A POKER GAME IN NEW YORK

Information is more readily available from New York than from the Maryland backwoods. Philip Embury landed in New York on August 10, 1760, with a group of twelve who had constituted a class in Ireland. Whether Embury began preaching at once is not known, although those who contend for New York's priority claim that he did so. Others think the group grew cold and Embury hid his talent under the bushel of indifference. The whole argument is set forth, pro and con, in the two books prepared for the General Conference of 1916.

At any rate somebody grew cold, for according to the well known story Barbara Heck urged him to preach when she discovered a group

playing cards. From this it would appear that Embury had not been preaching, but the point has not been proved.

At any rate, Embury preached to five persons in his own house at 10 Augustus Street in the autumn of 1766 and formed the first class in New York.

The succeeding events are well known. The class rented a room near the barracks "in the worst section of the town." There Embury was joined by Captain (actually a Lieutenant) Thomas Webb, who became a noted leader and the founder of Methodism in Philadelphia.

The next year "the Rigging Loft," was rented at 120 William Street. Then in 1768 Wesley Chapel on John Street was erected. It was the first in New York and a Methodist church has stood on the site ever since; a second was built in 1818 and a third, the present church, in 1841. It is one of the officially designated shrines of American Methodism, and the list of its pastors includes Francis Asbury, John Dickins, and many of the other early preachers. It was here that Asbury in November, 1771, discovered that "my brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities" and determined that "I shall show them the way." This was a momentous decision, for although Asbury had been in America only twenty-five days he knew that Methodism would not flourish unless it followed the frontier. Thus began "the era of the circuit rider" in which Methodism outstripped all other churches and in growth far surpassed that of the population.

In the argument over priority the friends of John Street Church have valiantly defended their cause. Dr. Carroll's *The First Methodist Society in America* is a powerful presentation of the case.

New York has had to contend against the testimony of Asbury. John Street quotes Asbury against Asbury, pointing out that in the *Discipline* of 1787 he inserted this statement: "About twenty years ago, Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the City of New York and formed a society of his own countrymen and the citizens. About the same time Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederick County, in the State of Maryland, and preaching there, formed some societies." It is pointed out that Asbury allowed this statement, with slight variations, to stand even after he wrote his Journal statement giving priority to Strawbridge. It remains in the *Discipline* to this day.

The statement does not actually ascribe priority to Embury but states that Strawbridge preached "about the same time." Regardless of priority, however, John Street Church enjoys the distinction of being the oldest operating society in the country, for its activity has never lapsed these one hundred ninety-three years, which should be a sufficient glory.

BEGINNINGS IN PHILADELPHIA

Now Philadelphia enters the picture. Whitefield preached there as

early as 1738 and acquired a preaching house. He must have made some converts though he organized no society. It is said that one of his converts, Edward Evans, was the first Methodist preacher in Philadelphia, in 1739 or 1740.

There also Methodism began in a sail loft. It was on Dock Street and was rented or owned by Samuel Croft, who is said to have been the first convert. There James Emerson gathered a class around 1767. In that same year Captain Webb arrived, found the group, and formed a society of seven members. This is the earliest known date. However, Lednum said that a ship carpenter preached in a shed or stable on Dock Street "long before Captain Webb began to visit this port." It is not said that this ship carpenter was a Methodist, but the historian of St. George's Church points out that his preaching site was not far from the meeting place of the group which Webb organized into a society.

The same historian calls attention to the fact that when Pilmoor and Boardman arrived in 1769 they were accosted by a man who had been in a society in Ireland and had met Boardman there; this he regards as evidence that other Methodists were in Philadelphia "before the coming of Wesley's itinerants, and perhaps before the arrival of Webb." Pilmoor found Webb in town "with a society of about 100 members" and one has said that "the facility with which Methodism was established is added evidence that it was not unknown here prior to 1767."

With a little too much assurance the St. George's historian says, "The evidence seems convincing that Methodism had not only been introduced in Philadelphia by Whitefield but by others who followed him and preceded Webb."

In 1768 the society moved from the Dock Street sail loft to what had been "a pot or public house" at 8 Loxley Court and the house at No. 8 is still standing. The street was named for Benjamin Loxley, and from the balcony of his house at 117 South Second Street Whitefield preached on his first visit in 1739.

A NITWIT BUYS A CHURCH

By 1769 the people began to consider the acquisition of a meeting house of their own. On November 23, 1769, about a month after his arrival, Pilmoor wrote in his *Journal*: "We met to consult about a more convenient place to preach in . . . what we should do I could not determine; ground to build upon might have been easily purchased, but we had no money, and besides we wanted the place *immediately*."

Then a fortuitous event transpired. The German Reformed Church had undertaken a building but could not complete it. This building, known as George Church, was sold at auction. "While the public auction was in progress," continued Pilmoor, "a gentleman's son who was *non-compos mentis*, happened to stop into the auction room and bought it. His father wanted to be off of the bargain, but could not, without

proving the insanity of his son. Rather than attempt this he was willing to lose fifty pounds by the job. Thus the Lord provided for us."

George Church was bought for six hundred and fifty pounds by Miles Pennington, a member of the society and by him conveyed to trustees by John Wesley's Model Deed.

This was the present Old St. George's Church, the first Methodist building to be called a church instead of a chapel or meeting house. It has been in use since 1769. Joseph Pilmoor and Richard Boardman, the first official missionaries sent out by John Wesley, preached their first sermons in America from its pulpit, and the same is true of Francis Asbury in 1771. It, like Wesley's Chapel in New York, Barratt's Chapel in Delaware, and the Strawbridge site in Maryland, has been designated by the General Conference as a shrine of Methodism.

THE MEANING OF IT ALL

Now where has this brought us? All may not agree, but the following points may be put forward in summary:

1. George Whitefield was the first preacher to raise up people who were called Methodists. This was as early as 1738. Whitefield was a worker with John Wesley, but he was a Calvinist, which Methodists have never been, and he lies buried today in a Presbyterian church. But he and his followers here were certainly known as Methodists.

2. We can hardly avoid the conclusion that Robert Strawbridge was in Maryland in 1753 and left there in 1754. If the argument advanced above is sound he preached at Leesburg, Virginia, in 1754, which establishes the church there as the oldest in the country. In the only official investigation ever made the jury voted eighteen to three in favor of the priority of Strawbridge as preacher and founder of societies. Considering all this, it seems that we must run the risk and give this priority to the Sam's Creek preacher.

3. Philip Embury preached in New York in 1766 and built Wesley's Chapel on John Street in 1768. It has the distinction of being the oldest Methodist society in America.

4. Old St. George's Church in Philadelphia, dating from 1769, and still occupying the original building, is the oldest Methodist meeting house in America.

In the fall of 1745 George Whitefield preached in Hanover County, Virginia, in the church of the Rev. Patrick Henry, uncle of the famous patriot who said, "If this be treason make the most of it." So, it seems, we must say in this connection.

Read to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Historical Society at Lake Junaluska, N.C., June 30, 1959, and printed by request.

THE FIRST METHODIST DEED IN AMERICA

By MELVIN LEE STEADMAN, JR.

We are all familiar with the story of old John Street Methodist Church in New York. An outgrowth of the work of Philip Embury and others, John Street Church has long been regarded as the "first" Methodist Church in America. The lease for the land, dated in 1768, and the actual deed of 1770, make their strong claim. And even though rather convincing evidence has been given as to the priority of Methodism in Maryland, many writers also tend to accord this honor to New York.

One reason for this is the old *Record Book*, so well described by Wakeley in his *Lost Chapters Recovered From The Early History Of American Methodism*.¹ This record proves step by step the progress in establishing the John Street Society.

On the other hand, relatively little proof was offered concerning Robert Strawbridge in Maryland. In 1916 the Joint Commission appointed by the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Protestant Church, none of whom were without bias in their several opinions, submitted their conclusions in the matter, some seven in number.² The seventh conclusion is especially interesting, and was intended to settle the matter:³

"That among all those who have wrought constructively in the development of Methodism in America, to the work of Robert Strawbridge in Maryland belongs the distinction of priority."

Yet this did not satisfy, for some doubted. The fact of his residence in Maryland during the 1760's was in question, and only family tradition placed Strawbridge there.⁴ This remained essentially the picture until July 7, 1958, when a clue was found placing one Robert Strawbridge in Maryland in 1753, fully thirteen years before any local tradition. Our study of this matter has been thorough, including a comprehensive survey of records for each County in Colonial Maryland, and no Strawbridge appears as a resident of that Colony between 1700 and 1753. The only exception was the visit of Ship Captain John Strawbridge to the Port of Annapolis, but a visit did not constitute residence. Also, we must take into consideration the small population of frontier Frederick County, where Strawbridge settled. The name Robert Strawbridge is certainly unusual enough, and it is not hard to conceive of a person being in a locality earlier where he was known to be at the prime of his career.

The record itself is full of humor, as well as being of first importance.

1 First published in 1858, and the edition quoted in this paper is that of 1889 (New York: Wilbur: B. Ketcham)—hereafter Wakeley.

2 Published in a small book entitled, *Origin of American Methodism*, The Methodist Book Concern, Chicago, 1916. Hereafter Origin.

3 Origin, p. 7.

4 A full display of the various traditions concerning the settlement of Strawbridge in Maryland can be found in a book, *How Methodism Came*, by Mrs. Arthur Bibbins (edited by Richard Larkin Shipley and Gordon Pratt Baker). The American Methodist Historical Society of the Baltimore Annual Conference, 1945.

The Grand Jurors for Frederick County, at the November Court, 1753, presented Robert Strawbridge's name "for philonesly Stealing of a pigg the property of Elias Delashmitt and Moses Harding."⁵ Thomas Fletchall was named Foreman of the Jury, and the case was laid over until summons could be issued. At the June Court following (1754), "after One Continuance," the matter was "Struck off" (i.e., dismissed), the "Defendant being Run away."⁶

This proof as to Robert Strawbridge being in Maryland at this early date comes by way of the pig-pen, and does not seem especially complimentary to the Methodists generally, but we would plead "extenuating circumstances," or "religious persecution." It was an impulsive act, but from tradition the hot-headed, black-haired, and bright-eyed young Irishman could have done it. We have no proof that the matter was persecution because of religious convictions. But Edwin Schell has recently turned up evidence that Elias Delashmitt, who accused Strawbridge, was an unsteady sort. Mr. Schell wrote concerning Delashmitt: ⁷

"[He] is demonstrated by the Frederick County court records between 1750 and 1762 as having been capable of persecution and false accusations. In 1750 he escaped trial on a charge of setting up a tippling house by the failure of witnesses to appear. Later he was a witness against James Hook and in 1758 he and Hook seem to have been partners and judgment was awarded against them. In 1758 he charged Alexander Jones with trespass and, if Latin phrases are read correctly, he was awarded a slave of Jones' seized by the sheriff . . ."

This matter is moot, but our question, (granted that the record is of our Robert Strawbridge) is this: where did he go to escape conviction? It was not hard to run away in that day. Conclusive proof is lacking as to his whereabouts between 1754 and 1760. He could have returned to Ireland, and probably did visit there, and, if tradition is correct, married while there. But it is not likely that a run-away would go to any port in Maryland to embark. More than likely, Strawbridge crossed the Potomac, dividing line between Frederick County, Maryland, into what is today Loudoun County, Virginia.

ORIGINS

Having presented reasonable evidence of the priority of Strawbridge in Maryland, I wish again to call attention to the John Street Church of New York. The lease for the John Street site, giving permission to use the lot, but not a title, is dated March 29, 1768. It is between Mary Barclay, Executrix, and Andrew Barclay, Leonard Lispenard, and David Clarkson, executors of the last Will and Testament of the Reverend Henry Barclay, late of New York, deceased, of the one part, and

⁵ Frederick County, Maryland, **Judgment Book H, Part I, page 144.**

⁶ Frederick County, Maryland, **Judgment Book H, Part I, page 460.**

⁷ Schell to Dr. Elmer T. Clark, December 25, 1958. Clark to Steadman, February 3, 1959.

Philip Embury, William Lupton, Charles White, Richard Sause, Henry Newton, Paul Hick (Heck), Thomas Taylor, and Thomas Webb, of the other part.⁸ The lease describes the granting of two lots in the North Ward of New York for five shillings (Lots 112 and 113), bounding "northeasterly in front of John Street." The lease does not state for what purpose the lots were to be used. Other than Methodist names, there is no indication that it was for their use.

The actual deed is dated on November 2, 1770, *when final* payment was made for the lots.⁹ On that date, Joseph Forbes of New York, Cordwainer, who apparently had the interest formerly that of Mrs. Mary Barclay, of the one part, and Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, William Lupton, Thomas Webb, John Southwell, Henry Newton, and James Jarvis, of New York, Trustees, of the other part, entered into the final deed in consideration of ten shillings. Reference is made in the deed to the lease by Mrs. Barclay, and the document states that the lots in question had thereon a meeting-house, "for the service of the Almighty God after the manner of the people called Methodists." Thus the John Street claim, based on the lease of 1768, and a deed of 1770, has stood the test of the years.

But Old Virginia, the Mother of Presidents, which can prove so many of our first things, including the first permanent English settlement, and the first Thanksgiving Day, now has proof of the first Methodist land *held under* title in America. On May 11, 1766, two years before the John Street lease, and five years before the deed, land was granted in Loudoun County, Virginia, in the County Seat Town of Leesburg, which was held thereafter until 1902 by Methodist people, without interruption.

Historians have known of this deed. But Leesburg has never been a center of commerce and historical interest on a national level, and the community history is yet to be written.

In 1954, Dr. William Warren Sweet was making a final draft of his book: *Virginia Methodism; A History*,¹⁰ when for the first time, Leesburg Methodism was given a new focus by a nationally known historian. Dr. Sweet wrote:¹¹

"What is thought to have been the first Methodist society in Virginia was that in Leesburg, the the (sic) nearest town in Virginia to Strawbridge's base of operations on Sam's Creek. The exact date that Methodism began in Leesburg is not known, but in 1766, there were sufficient followers to make plans for building a meeting house. It was on May 11 of that year that the Methodist Society purchased a half-acre lot in that town for 'no other use but for a church or meeting house and grave-yard.'

On this lot the Old Stone Church of Leesburg was built, begun in 1766 and completed in 1770."

Dr. Sweet, not having done any original research into the matter, but

8 Wakeley, pp. 50-53.

9 Wakeley, pp. 58-63.

of necessity relying on the conclusions of others, is guarded in his writing of the Old Stone Church. Proof is now sufficient to confirm that this was not only the first Methodist Meeting House in Virginia, but the deed to the lot was the first Methodist deed in America.

LOCATION OF LEESBURG

This first deed is in *Deed Book L*, at pages 451-453, in the records of Loudoun County, kept in the Clerk's Office at Leesburg.

The County of Loudoun is in the Strawbridge country, in the "Piedmont" section of Virginia, with an area today of 524 square miles. In the extreme northwesterly corner of the State, one boundary is the Potomac River and adjacent Maryland, and another is West Virginia. To the east lies Fairfax County, the mother County, which was subdivided to make up Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, and part of the original District of Columbia. Of irregular shape, the upper apex of Loudoun is formed by the Potomac River on the northeast and the Blue Ridge Mountains on the northwest. In "Lower" Loudoun, to the east of Leesburg, the land consists of rolling meadows and relatively flat land. In "Upper Loudoun" are numerous lovely hill-ranges, locally called mountains, such as Catoctin, Bull Run, Blue Ridge, and the Short Hills.¹² The Town of Leesburg is nearly thirty-five miles from Washington, D.C., and one hundred and thirty-five miles from Richmond.

LEESBURG

Leesburg was a crossroads settlement in the early Colonial period, and was a noted stopping place. Minor's Tavern, the first public hotel, then called an "Ordinary" (as all taverns were known in the South at that time), enjoyed a constant influx of visitors. Captain Nicholas Minor, who owned the Ordinary and nearby land, saw the opportunity of expanding on his own door-step, and petitioned the House of Burgesses to establish a town. On October 7, 1758, Leesburg (called Georgetown) was formed, and the original survey, made by John Hough, Surveyor for Lord Thomas Fairfax, located seventy lots. It had seven main streets: Royal, Loudoun, King, Market, Cornwall, Church, and Back Street, the latter now called Wirt Street.

The main or Market Street follows U.S. Route 7, called the Leesburg Pike, which was an established Indian Trail over two hundred miles long when first seen by the white settlers.

The name Georgetown was in honor of the King, but in the back woods of Loudoun County, His Majesty would be of no assistance in selling lots. Minor therefore named the Town for the noted Lee family, many of whom owned land in the County. At this time, as in years to

¹⁰ Whittet & Shepperson, Richmond, Virginia, 1955. Hereafter Sweet.

¹¹ Sweet, p. 46.

¹² Information based on *Legends of Loudoun* by Harrison Williams, Garrett & Massie, Inc., Richmond, Virginia, 1938, page 1.

follow, the Lee family enjoyed as much prestige and wealth as any in the Colony.

Minor's new town became quickly popular. Located on a major north-south route, Leesburg was for many years the stopping place also in the western movement. Among the first lot owners were men like John Hough, the Quaker farmer and surveyor; Andrew Link, yeoman; Jacob Faw, saddler; Joseph Janney, merchant; William Dodd, ordinary keeper; Stephen Emery, blacksmith; and Robert Hamilton, shoemaker. They were required by Minor to erect a building on their lot in three years, otherwise the lot reverted to his ownership. He was specific in his requirements, and the following is found in each old deed:

"[The purchaser] shall erect, build, and finish on the said Lott a house of Brick, Stone or wood, well framed, of the dimensions of 20 feet long by 16 feet wide and 9 feet pitched . . . with a Brick or Stone chimney thereto . . . within three years."

More than half the original lot holders were dissenters, and not members of the Anglican Church. Loudoun County, always a haven for free thinkers, had a large number of Quakers, New Lights, Presbyterians, and Anabaptists. The established church was never able to achieve a foot hold as did the sects. In 1749, Rev. Charles Green, Irish Rector of Truro Parish, which at that time included all of present day Loudoun, Fairfax, and Arlington, explained the difficulties he encountered.¹³ His report, which gives each resident by name, some 2,035 in all, notes the dissenters. This was, of course, too early for a Methodist, but Presbyterians, Baptists, Papists, and Quakers are listed, all of whom, by law, were of the established church.

Thus Methodist preaching would and did find its place in Loudoun County. Assuming that Strawbridge was the first person to preach Methodist doctrines in Leesburg, (and we must have a founder, for the congregation was there), one of his converts must have been one Robert Hamilton.

ROBERT HAMILTON, SHOEMAKER

Robert Hamilton, perhaps related to James Hamilton, an early Justice of Loudoun County, was of Scottish ancestry. He was a "Cordwainer" (now called Shoemaker), and acquired a large estate in the new Town. It is to Robert Hamilton that the Methodists of Leesburg owe their claim to being the first to hold land under title in America.

Robert Hamilton died in August, 1777. He made his Will on March 14, 1777, and it was probated the following August 11th.¹⁴ He describes himself as a Cordwainer and names the following family: James, Robert. Jane. Ann, and a married daughter, Margaret Nepper. Executors named in the Will were Alexander Cooper, and Alexander Mc-

¹³ This document is of special value in writing of the religious element of its day. It is in a public institution, having recently been brought to light, but its location and further details are not available to insert here since it is soon to be published.

¹⁴ Loudoun County, Virginia, **Will Book B, page 181.**

Intyre. Witnesses were: Samuel Murrey, George Hammatt, and Henry Harris. Of the children named, his son, James, was active in early Methodism, and a grandson, Matthew G. Hamilton, was a member of the Baltimore Conference.

An inventory of the estate was filed a short time after the probate of his Will, and lists many items of interest, including household furniture, clothing, shoemakers tools, and one especially significant item: "1 Universal Library."¹⁵ The Universal Library was a Methodist publication, edited by John Wesley, and shows that Hamilton was buying Methodist literature. The *Estate Account* of Robert Hamilton, by Jane Hamilton, beginning in August, 1777, concludes with September 10, 1793, when the Account was closed. This was returned to the Court on September 11, 1793, by a good Methodist, John Littlejohn, (of whom we will shortly say more), and Patrick Cavan.¹⁶

JOHN POULTNEY

Since he had Quaker neighbors, it is possible that John Poultney was a Quaker. But since his descendants were early Methodists in Loudoun County, we feel that a recent discovery indicates that he too was a Methodist.

The Will of John Poultney was the third one probated in the County.¹⁷ It was composed on March 19, 1759, and probated on April 10th of the same year. His estate appears for a number of years, as was the custom, before a final accounting. The *Estate Account* of 1762,¹⁸ is significant. Reference is made there to Poultney's "Subscription to a Meeting House." Only dissenters had meeting houses in Virginia, and only Anglicans were thought to occupy a church. This does not, in itself, indicate Methodist leanings. But among the "proved accounts," (that is, certified as lawful for payment from the estate, being debts owed by the deceased at death) is this:

"John Wesley—proved acct."

No John Wesley, or any Wesley ever lived in Loudoun County. The writer has personally read every deed, will, and estate account for the first fifty years of the County as a legal body. He has also read the old Court Order Books, over a ten years period, and the Wesley name was not observed. It would seem that Poultney purchased something, probably books, and did not pay for them before his death. Since they were published by John Wesley, he is named to receive payment. We may never prove this point, but we ask you to "think on these things."

PROOF AS TO THE DEED BEING METHODIST

This first deed does not say that the land was for a Methodist Society.

¹⁵ Loudoun County, Virginia, Will Book B, page 189.

¹⁶ Loudoun County, Virginia, Will Book D, page 338.

¹⁷ Loudoun County, Virginia, Will Book A, p. 13.

¹⁸ Loudoun Countl, Virginia, Will Book A, p. 87

It could not be a deed of any other kind—certainly not Anglican, for these always followed a set form, were made to a particular Vestry, with full specifications. It was established in 1851, and again in 1902, in the Court of Chancery of Loudoun County, that the Methodist Episcopal Church held Lot No. 50 under title from 1766. The following will show the proof accepted by the Court:

HEAD VS. HOUGH¹⁹

This suit was filed in 1850, and the Decree was returned to the court during the April term 1852. The suit was part of the controversy resulting from the formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The members of the Methodist Episcopal Church were under obligation to *prove* that the land in question had been held by them since the 1766 deed. They did this to the entire satisfaction of the court, and the Southern group, formerly part of the older group, erected another church, now the Leesburg Methodist Church.

Among the papers filed in this suit, is the deposition of Joseph Hilliard, who was born September 24, 1788 at Big Spring, about two miles north of Leesburg. Hilliard made his deposition on October 8, 1851 before F. W. Lockett, Justice of the Peace, and stated that he was baptized in the "Old Stone" Church by the Reverend John Littlejohn, had lived in Leesburg and vicinity for 55 years, excepting three years in Alexandria, and five years in the West. Mr. Hilliard said that his parents and others had told him that the lot in question was given to the Methodists by "old Robert Hamilton [who] made them a present of it, for a burying ground and to build a church on" to use his own words.

The petition to John W. Tyler, Judge of the Circuit Court of Loudoun County, states that at "some date prior to the year 1790," there was a dedication of this lot and that the land, a gift of Robert Hamilton, was for "the use of the said religious congregation [of the Methodist Episcopal Church] to erect a house of worship and to use and occupy as a place of burial." The petition further stated that the congregation on whose behalf the suit was instituted, that of the Methodist Episcopal Church—"for whose use and benefit the aforesaid dedication was made, continued and perpetuated by a regular and constant succession of ministers and members from a period *prior to the time of* said dedication to the present moment [1850]." But the most convincing statement is that of the Reverend Matthew G. Hamilton, a grandson of Robert Hamilton, who stated that he was forty one years old, a native of Leesburg, ordained a minister for twelve years, and who had known the property since childhood. He wrote in his fine penmanship on October 6, 1851:

"My Father & Mother have always informed me that the Lot in question was given to the Methodist Episcopal Church by Robert Hamilton, the Father

¹⁹ Filed in Loudoun County, Virginia, records, Case 24.

of my Father—for the use by said M.E. Church—and I have never heard the fact questioned by any body.”

NORWOOD VS. GAVER²⁰

This suit, involving the use of the “Old Stone” Church by Negroes, is a sad story. But the proof of ownership, presented to the Court, is of interest: In the joint answer of A. R. Woolford, George W. Schooley, Samuel J. Kalb, John E. James, W. P. Hilleary, Peter W. Fry, David W. Spring, John M. Davis, and Chester C. Gaver—trustees, contains the following statement:

“These respondents . . . believe it is true that Nicholas Minor did convey a certain lot of about one half acre of land in Leesburg, designated as Lot No. 50, to one Robert Hamilton, providing in said deed that he should dispose of said lot to no other use but for a church or meeting house and grave-yard, all of which will more fully appear from an inspection of a true copy of said deed.

Respondents have no personal knowledge in respect to the seisin and possession of said lot by said Hamilton, but are informed that he dedicated it to and it was used for a grave yard, and what is known as “The Old Stone Church,” of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Leesburg, was erected thereon, and the trustees of said society, subject to the jurisdiction of the Baltimore and Virginia Conference thereof . . .”

The *Bill* submitted by S. H. Norwood, a minister of the M.E. Church, and others, filed in July, 1897, stated:

“On May 11th 1766 one Nicholas Minor, (who was then seized and possessed of the same) in consideration of £ 4, to him in hand paid sold and conveyed a certain lot of one half acre of land situated in said Town of Leesburg, Va., binding on Back St., and designated as Lot No. 50 in the plat and survey of said town, to one Robert Hamilton to hold in trust ‘to dispose of the lot to no other use but for a church or meeting house and grave yard.’ Said Deed was duly recorded in Deed Book 1 L, p. 451 Loudoun County Clerk’s Office and a copy of it is herewith filed as Exhibit A. Livery of seizen and peaceable possession of said lot, in accordance with the terms of said Deed were forthwith given to said Hamilton, and he and his successors held the said lot for the use and benefit of the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church worshipping at Leesburg who erected a house of worship thereon and used and occupied the residue of said lot as and for a burying ground.”

And if proof as above accepted by the Court is not enough, here is another. Whenever an original deed was drawn, the parties involved could leave it in the charge of the Clerk of the Court, to prevent loss by fire and theft. If however, for some reason, one party or the other wished to hold the deed, it was forthwith *examined* fully by the Clerk, with his own Court Copy already filed, to ascertain any corrections, and then *delivered* up to the party in question. Hence, the Clerk, for his own purposes, usually noted on the margin Court Copy: “Exd. & dd.” (meaning examined and delivered), then follows the name, and the date. This

²⁰ Filed in Loudoun County, Virginia, records, “Final Decrees, April—October, 1902.”

appears time and again in the Virginia records, and is fully shown in the Loudoun County archives. Here is the notation on the Minor-Hamilton deed:

“Exd. & dd.
Jno. Littlejohn
Sept. 28, '68.”

There is no question as to who John Littlejohn was. We here give the only known facts of his life.

JOHN LITTLEJOHN

The papers and Journal of John Littlejohn have recently been located in Kentucky. Bishop Henry B. Bascom had them in 1841, and dickered a suitable financial reward in publishing them.²¹ But apparently he did not do so, for no printed record of John Littlejohn has yet appeared. It is a great pity that this old Methodist saint is unknown in the church he helped to found. He is known to a few from the Fairfax-Loudoun County area.

John Littlejohn was born in Penrith, County Cumberland, England, on December 7, 1756.²² His obituary states that he came to this country at an unknown date prior to 1769—probably 1767. He was trained in a Classical School and in English public schools. He was in early life twice apprenticed as a mechanic, and also acted as a Clerk or assistant shop keeper. His first residence in America was at Port Tobacco, Maryland, where he probably met Robert Strawbridge. He was in Leesburg by 1768, later in Northumberland County, Norfolk, and Annapolis, Maryland.

In 1773 he moved to Alexandria, Virginia, where in 1774, he was re-awakened under the preaching of John King (having also heard Robert Williams preach in Norfolk). Finally converted under John Sigmon, he immediately took steps, with twelve others, to found the first Society in Alexandria, later the Trinity Methodist Church. He became a class leader, later an exhorter, and in 1775 commenced his ministerial career. In 1776 he entered the itinerancy, and served the Berkeley (Virginia) Circuit, now in West Virginia, in company with William Watters, who was Senior Preacher.

He was active until the autumn of 1778, when he located because of marriage and settled at Leesburg. He married Miss Monica Talbott, of an old and well-to-do Maryland and Virginia family.

It is stated in his obituary that at Leesburg he continued filling and discharging various important offices and trusts connected with civil and religious society from 1778 until the autumn of 1818, when he

21 Mentioned in a letter written by him on March 2, 1841, now owned by Dr. Jacob S. Payton of Falls Church, Virginia.

22 See his *Obituary* published in the *Minutes* of the M.E. Church, (1829-39). Vol. 2, published in New York by T. Mason & G. Lane, 1840, pp. 486-487.

moved to Louisville, Ky. He was Sheriff and Justice of Loudoun County, and during the War of 1812, when the British burned Washington, the national archives were brought by wagon to Leesburg for safe keeping. President James Madison turned the keys and their custody over to Littlejohn, who for more than two weeks was responsible for the safety of such items as the Declaration of Independence.

In a book entitled *Sixty Years in a School-room*,²³ an autobiography of Mrs. Julia A. Tevis, Principal of Science Hill Female Academy, Shelbyville, Kentucky, appears the following:

"It was . . . Colonel [Armistead Thomson] Mason who said of 'Father Littlejohn,' a man of deep, unaffected piety, combined with a cultivated intellect and industrial talent, 'I have known the Rev. Mr. Littlejohn to finish a saddle, preside on the bench as a magistrate, preach a funeral sermon, baptize a child, and perform the marriage ceremony, all on the same day.' After I commenced teaching in Shelbyville I became acquainted with this eminent apostle of Jesus Christ, when his snowy locks and bent form indicated great age; and from him learned the finale of the Mason and McCarty duel."

(Here follows a paragraph dealing with the duel)

"Father Littlejohn, to whom I have just alluded, was a man of many sorrows, but like St. Paul, he suffered willingly for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord; and like the same great apostle, all his trophies, all his spoils were hung upon the cross of Christ. The blessings of many years does not often crown a human brow without leaving thereon the impress of suffering. The good old man brought me his granddaughter to educate—a sweet, dove-eyed little girl, the sole blossom left upon the household tree. A kind tone of voice and a gentleness of manner were characteristics of Catharine Littlejohn. She was like the delicious mignonette, lifting up its sweet blossoms laden with fragrance to be poured like incense upon the heart of the old grandfather. Her looks, like the cheerful smile of Spring, sent a glow of warmth upon the Winter of his age. She was beautiful in her girlish simplicity, quiet and dreamy when alone, gay and joyous with her young companions, but shy and silent among strangers, though there were no awkwardnesses that were not as good as graces. She married young, died early, and went home to join the family throng.

I cannot close without a word more about Father Littlejohn. His name must ever live in the annals of early Methodism. He was accounted faithful among the pioneers. 'The Church knew and loved and gave him praise.' [Here follows a six-line verse] The good man's labors cease, but memory retouches the lines that marked its varied path—it has a thousand tongues to hold companionship with such a guide."

In his unpublished *Journal*, the Reverend Thomas Scott²⁴ wrote:

"The families of the Talbots, the Boydstones, the Hites, the Littlejohns, and the Welshes occupied elevated standings in society, and were regarded as pious, excellent members of our Church.

. . . He was a saddler by trade, and always sustained an excellent character

²³ See Chapter VIII, page 130.

for piety, honesty, and integrity. He ranked among the soundest doctrinal, and practical preachers of that day. Of him it was often said, 'If you want a good saddle, go to Littlejohn; if you want to be well married, send for Littlejohn; if you want your children baptized, send for Littlejohn; if you want a preacher to attend a funeral, send for Littlejohn; if you want to hear a good sermon, send for Littlejohn; and if you want good practical advice, send for Littlejohn. . . . He was a man of great gravity, possessed of a clear discriminating judgment, was a sound divine, devoted Christian, faithful in the discharge of his ministerial functions and when in the prime of life as a preacher he was not surpassed by any of the preachers of the day.'

John Littlejohn was readmitted into the Baltimore Conference in March, 1831, and died in Kentucky on May 13, 1836.

METHODIST ACTIVITY IN LEESBURG DURING THE 1770'S

It is evident that there was much activity in Leesburg during the 1770's. A good source of information is the *Journal* of Nicholas Cresswell, a young English aristocrat, who visited Leesburg.²⁵ His first notation, Sunday, December 4, 1774, states that he attended a Methodist Meeting in Leesburg, and that this "Sect is scattered in every place and have got considerable footing here, owing to the negligence of the Church Parsons."²⁶ On another December Sunday, in 1775,²⁷ he "Went to hear Bombast, Noise and Nonsense, uttered by a Methodist and an Anabaptist preacher." On December 27, 1775, a Thursday, he wrote of a Methodist meeting in town, with great numbers of people coming in sleighs.²⁸

Cresswell writes of Captain William Douglass, a local Justice, and well-to-do planter, who was a member of the Leesburg Society. Cresswell attended meetings with Douglass several times. On Sunday, May 19, 1776, he went to town, and found "Nothing but Methodist preaching—hypocrisy and nonsense."²⁹ On Sunday, February 9, 1777, he dined with Thomson Mason, brother of Col. George Mason of "Gunston Hall," author of the Virginia Bill of Rights, and noted in his *Journal*:³⁰

"A Methodist preaching here. In the evening the parson and I had a long discourse about the New Faith, as he calls it. Find him a sensible man not so much biggoted as some of them are. Sunday, February 16th, 1777—In the course of the last six days I have read more religious authors and had more discourse about religion than in all my life before. Capt'n. Douglas[s] uses his utmost endeavours to make a proselyte of me, but I cannot find that Whitefield's road to Heaven is one jot better or nearer than Martin Luther's. Therefore, will continue in the opinion under which I was educated."

24 Owned by the Reverend Lawrence Sherwood, 102 College Street, Glenville, West Virginia. Quoted with permission of the owner.

25 *The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell (1774-1777)*, Lincoln Maveagh, The Dial Press, New York, 1924 (hereafter Cresswell).

26 Cresswell, page 48.

27 Ibid pages 133-134

28 Ibid, page 134.

A short time later, February 24, 1777, he went with Captain Douglass and family to a Methodist meeting,³¹ and wrote:³²

“Expected to have had a Methodist meeting here to-day. The Company, or Congregation, of Canting, Whining Hypocrites met, but the Parson disappointed them. I am sorry Captn. Douglas[s] should be such a dupe to these religious quacks. He keeps a good table, is a good-natured man, easily led, and rather unsteady in his religious principles, always glad to see or converse with these Fag-end-of-the-Scripture mongers, and as long as his house is open to them they will haunt him as bad as they tell us the Devil haunts their meetings. They are a set of the noisiest fellows I ever heard. Instead of enforcing their arguments, they only exalt their voices. Thursday, February 27, 1777—One of these Parsons has had a long confab with me today. He is one of the most effected bigoted little puppies I ever met with. Out of his great kindness has made old Pluto a compliment of me.”

We leave Cresswell with a final indignity, when he was kept awake at Mosses Ordinary near Leesburg, on March 9, 1777, by the “groans of a Methodist Parson who slept in the next room.”

THE CHURCH BUILDING

Going back to the deposition of Joseph Hilliard in the suit, *Head vs. Hough*, it is noted that he speaks of a building erected in 1802 “on part of the foundation of the old Church, and I think covers the whole of the old foundation. It is a larger building than the old one, and [I] had many a time, for years, been at meeting in the old Church before it was pulled down.”

The evidence available indicates that the first building for the Leesburg Congregation was completed in 1770 and was a temporary structure of “soft stone.”³³ The old Quarterly Conference Book giving the early history of this building was in private hands as late as 1935, but has since disappeared. Notes made in 1935 show that the Sixth Conference of American Methodism was held there in May, 1778, and that the building was dedicated, debt free, by Joseph Pilmoor, on July 24, 1790. That this was replaced between 1785 and 1790 is well established, and a picture of the old building shows clearly a date stone, 1785. This must have been the date construction was begun. It was apparently enlarged in 1802, sufficiently to make Hilliard think of it as a new building.

A writer in *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia* of 1883 wrote of the old building:

“The first house of worship owned by the Methodist society of Leesburg, was a small stone church . . . built prior to 1780, and for a number of years,

29 Ibid, page 143.

30 Ibid, page 184.

31 Ibid, page 184.

32 Ibid, page 185.

33 *Hardesty's Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, H. H. Hardesty & Co., Chicago and Toledo, 1883, pp. 277-278.

the only place of worship in the town. The substantial stone building which they now [1883] own and occupy was built in 1790, and its foundations enclose those of the first church, which being small, and constructed out of soft stone, was taken down. The location of the pulpit remains unchanged; in the interior of the building, some slight changes have taken place, but no addition has been made enlarging it, excepting the pulpit recess."

Mrs. Arthur (Pearl Shreve) Jenkins, in her *History of Methodism in Leesburg*,³⁴ says:

"The interior was bare and unadorned, with the pulpit towering above the plain benches on which the congregation sat. The benches were later replaced by pews, high and square, and large enough to accomodate an entire family. Within the pews were hinged seats which were turned up when the worshippers stood for the long prayers, and made a great clatter as the congregation sat down again."

The pulpit recess contained an arch-shaped sign, yellow with blue letters, like the one at the original Lovely Lane in Baltimore, with the quotation from the Book of Genesis: "Thou God Seest Me."³⁵ This is apparent in the only picture in existence of the old church interior.³⁶

Galleries were built on three sides, where the colored members of the congregation sat. One story tells of a bishop who was preaching a great and moving sermon on one occasion. A colored worshipper in the gallery became so excited that she began to shout, greatly disturbing the bishop. In desperation he stopped preaching, and, pointing in the direction of the offender, thundered, "Let Africa be silent and let America be heard!"

LAST DAYS OF THE BUILDING

According to a decree rendered in the suit *Norwood vs. Gaver*, (October 19,1900) the Old Stone Church was offered for sale. It was deeded by Charles P. Janney and Edwin E. Garrett (Court Commissioners) to S. Carroll Chancellor and Benjamin V. White for \$416.05.³⁷ It was soon torn down, and the materials incorporated into buildings in Leesburg. The gallery columns of iron, are now the pillars of a Leesburg front porch, and the communion table is in the Leesburg Methodist Church.

Following the destruction of the building, the adjacent Parsonage was sold. Old gravestones were torn up to make way for a tennis court. Finally, an Episcopal Missionary, Armistead T. Welbourne, settled in the old house, re-erected surviving stones, and made a lovely garden. He has also uncovered the brick entrance walk and the old foundation stones. Two very old stones, with many others survive:

"Wright Brickell, died 1777 in his 34th year.

"Sarah Mimot died April—1779, in her 26th year with infant son."

Buried there also is Richard Owings, first native born Local Preacher

³⁴ Published by the Ceesburg Methodist Church,1952, page 1.

³⁵ Genesis XVI, verse XIII.

³⁶ Owned by Melvin Lee Steadman, Jr., Fairfax, Virginia.

³⁷ Loudoun County, Virginia, Deed Book 8 C's, page 415.

in America, who died in 1786, Christopher Frye, Stephen Asbury Rozzell, and other prominent Methodist preachers.

METHODIST CAMPMEETINGS IN THE DEEP SOUTH, 1799-1859

By J. B. CAIN

The Methodist campmeeting is the abomination of its enemies, the pride of its partisans and the despair of the historians. With no Scriptural background and more closely related to the Old Testament than the New, with no Disciplinary provisions to give it a legal place in Methodist organization and activity, with its early history clouded by uncertainty and tradition, and with its refusal to pass from the current scene in spite of the prophets of dissolution, the Methodist campmeeting is one of the strange and interesting religious phenomena of all time.

While there have been campmeetings promoted by other groups, the fact remains that the campmeeting is a Methodist institution. It began as an inter-denominational enterprise but it was soon absorbed by the Methodist movement.

HISTORY

It is accurate enough to say that the first campmeetings were held in the decade between 1790 and 1800, though a few historians place the beginning after the latter date, and some earlier than 1790. The first holders were probably unconscious that they were beginning a new movement and would have been surprised to learn that anything notable had taken place. Camping was a common experience for the pioneer and worship was held outdoors as often as within. Dr. A. M. Shipp in his *History of Methodism in South Carolina* tells of Methodist families who moved from Brunswick County, Virginia, into Lincoln County, North Carolina, in 1787. "Morning and evening they held their devotions among their families, and occasionally they met together for a love feast or experience meeting at night." No one claims that this was a campmeeting, but it had elements that went into them and was probably repeated hundreds of times.

The writer's great-grandmother Elizabeth Goff, later the wife of Rev. Henry Fletcher, a local preacher, attended a campmeeting near Wilmington, N. C. in 1800 and was converted under the preaching of John Gamewell. McClintock and Strong say that campmeetings began in Kentucky in 1799, with which Lee, Luccock and Dixon agree and show pictures of the site of the first campmeeting on Mud River and of the grave of Valentine Cook near this campground. James Jenkins says that they began in Kentucky and Tennessee about 1800, and Jesse Lee

gives 1801 as the approximate date. Dr. Shipp says that John McGee, after serving the Lincoln circuit in North Carolina in 1793, located and "remained in a section of the country where campmeetings had become well-known and popular until 1798, when he removed and settled in Sumner County, Tennessee." This indicates that campmeetings were held in North Carolina before 1798. The active part that John McGee took after his move indicates that he was familiar with the movement before that time. Dr. Shipp refers to the campmeetings on Red River in Kentucky and the Cumberland River in Tennessee in 1799 as taking place "five years after their origin," which would make the first in North Carolina in 1794.

If there is some uncertainty about the beginnings there is none about the fact that the movement spread like wild fire. There was a campmeeting in Kentucky in 1799, one in North Carolina in 1800, one in South Carolina in 1802 and one in Mississippi in December, 1804. Dr. Sweet says that in 1807 there were at least four hundred.

The primitive equipment accounts for the ease with which they were held without much notice and with little preparation. The first in the Mississippi Territory was apparently planned, according to Lorenzo Dow's journal, on November 12, 1804, and actually begun on December 14. Later campmeetings, which had better equipment, required longer preparation and were likely to be more permanent.

From the beginning there were some essential necessities. The first was water, from springs or stream. Many campgrounds bore names of springs or streams. The second necessity was a Methodist family with interest and resources to give spiritual support and provision to the preachers. William Winans in his journal indicates that the ministers who attended the combined Bethel campmeeting and Mississippi Conference in 1822 were entertained in the home of John McRae adjacent to the campground. The third essential was preachers. One minister might hold ordinary services but the strenuous campmeeting program called for strength that could be provided only by numbers. Of course a congregation was essential, but this was not usually difficult. Attendance never reached as high a level as reports indicated, in all probability, but only on rare occasions was attendance so small as to close the campmeeting in advance of the appointed time. Actually most campmeetings were not long. The frequent statement that sometimes they lasted for weeks is not born out by any records. The usual length was from four to six days, including one Sabbath. Longer campmeetings embraced two Sundays. The schedule was strenuous. Prayer meetings were held before breakfast, a preaching service at eight o'clock, another at eleven, one at three o'clock, followed by grove prayer meetings, and then the final preaching service at night. By that time those present were exhausted and the nights were fairly quiet.

The date was determined by local circumstances, and the practice of

holding the campmeetings at a given time was a later development. This first campmeeting in Mississippi is the only one known to have been held in midwinter and only a few were held in the spring; the Cane Ridge campmeeting in Jefferson County, Mississippi, was held in May. For obvious reasons most were in the summer, but in the deep South many were in the fall, when the weather was cooler and food was more easily kept. For the fall campmeetings October was a favorite month, since the weather was usually better and the major crops had been harvested. There was a tradition in Mississippi that it never rained on the second Sunday in October, and at first Shiloh campmeeting, Rankin County, (1832-1959), included that Sunday, but later moved its regular time of meeting to August, probably because schools were in session in October. Salem campmeeting (1826-1959) includes still the second Sunday in October. Of the other three active campgrounds in the Mississippi Conference only one, Palmer Creek, Harrison County (1883-1959), has a movable date, from late August through September. The other two have at present fixed dates: Felders or Topisaw, Pike County, (1843-1959), has its meeting in August, and New Prospect, also in Jackson County (1880-1959), is in October. In these children are taken from the campground to school in buses and sometimes on Friday there is no school.

Assuming the correctness of Dr. Sweet's estimate of 400 campmeetings in 1807, which is probably an over-estimate, that was perhaps the high point in number. As they increased their equipment they decreased in number. Of approximately one hundred known in the Mississippi Conference probably not more than twenty were in existence at the same time. There were large areas in which none were held and there were several in the same area. Sometimes they were in actual competition with one another. For instance the leaders in the Hennington campmeeting, near Crystal Springs, Copiah County, complained that those in the Providence campground, some twenty miles distant, had taken "their" time. It developed that Providence was set for a fixed date and Hennington was set for the "light nights in August," which that year conflicted. By the time of the War Between the States most of the early campmeetings had passed away and a few well-established campgrounds had taken their places. Even such an old and honored campground as Spring Hill in Jefferson County, established in 1807, the second year that Lorenzo Dow came to Mississippi, had folded its tents around 1854.

The war created havoc for the campgrounds in Mississippi, and only one of them, Salem, survived the conflict. Bethel, in Wilkinson County, one of the oldest and best established campgrounds, did not resume active operation until 1892, more than thirty years after it suspended in 1861. Providence did not begin again until 1874, and many of the old and almost all of the new places were never in action any more.

Between 1861 and 1872, when Seashore campground was established, there were only campmeetings. Salem and one held in 1867 west of the river from Salem, which announced that it would be held "according to the primitive plan," meaning probably without cottages, tabernacle or anything permanent. This campground, at Flurry's church, apparently was held only one year. But the war did not end campmeetings. The late Dr. Franklin N. Parker, in an excellent history of the Seashore campground, says that the difficulties of the post-war period accentuated the campmeetings and that multitudes found release from the burden of poverty and frustration in them. In the Mississippi Conference about as many campgrounds were established after the war as before. Nearly all the unknown grounds were in the pre-war period while few escaped publicity after the war.

Before the War between the States, there was considerable uniformity in the campmeetings, differing largely in the matter of equipment. But from that time a changing pattern began to develop. The old rural type continued, and is the only type still in active operation. The resort or railroad campground began to emerge and at first seemed to be the ideal solution of the problem of accessibility. It was usually situated near or on the railroad, some well-known watering place, or both. Since the campmeetings were trying to reach as many people as possible it seemed clear that placing a ground where it might be reached would be the best location. So the plan proceeded with success. The old Crystal Springs campground was reorganized and removed to a location nearer the Illinois Central railroad, on several springs that gave their name to the community. Seashore campground was between the Louisville and Nashville railroad and the Gulf of Mexico. Lake campground was not far from the Alabama and Vicksburg railroad, Sam Jones campground was on the line of the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley railroad, and Leaf River Campground was located on Leaf River, near the Moselle station on the New Orleans and Northeastern railroad. For a while the plan succeeded. Where a few hundred people attended other campmeetings, thousands now came, nearly all of them by railroad. Excursions were the order of the day, and it is probable that many attended who had never heard of a campmeeting and did not actually know what they were attending while there.

Naturally this influx of people only interested in the spiritual purposes of the campground created many problems and solved few. An occasional visitor was converted but the majority who came to scoff did not remain to pray. There were some real problems. How, for instance, could vast multitudes be fed? Where would they rest during intervals? But the most vital problem was how to take a holiday crowd and transform it into a worshipping congregation? This became so serious that the Hennington campmeeting at Crystal Springs seriously considered abandonment of Sunday services altogether, to be resumed on Monday

morning after the Amorites and Hittites had returned to New Orleans, Mobile, Meridian, Jackson and Vicksburg.

Excursion trains from central Tennessee came to Seashore campground on the Mississippi gulf coast more than once, in one instance bringing 3,500 people. This particular type of institution carried the seeds of its own destruction. Like the dinosaurs they simply passed from the scene, leaving only a few enlarged historical bones as evidence of their existence. Leaf River was the first to pass, followed by Mounser's Creek. Lake became the Patron's Union, a sort of chautauqua, with a program that survived the last campmeeting by a score of years. Hennington campground was merged with the Crystal Springs Chautauqua, which continued for a few years after campmeetings were no longer held. Seashore campground still exists. It bears the name of the Seashore Methodist Assembly and has an executive secretary. The tabernacle has been replaced by a modern church building, with air conditioning.

There was another trend between the close of the war and the end of the 19th century, and that was the establishment of the independent holiness campmeeting. Frost Bridge campmeeting was re-established in 1896 on the site of a former campground and continues till this day, ninety percent of its promoters being Methodists. Perry campground on the Gulf and Ship Island railroad was a by-product of controversies at Palmer Creek campground. It too, continues until the present, though with meager equipment and decreasing interest. Caseyville campmeeting came into existence about the time Crystal Springs went out, though in an adjoining county. It has been closed a quarter of a century. As stated, there are now in the Mississippi Conference five active campmeetings. All are in rural communities at a considerable distance from a railroad or principal highway.

PREACHING AT CAMPMEETINGS

The matter of preaching at a campmeeting settled itself, since whoever happened to be present was pressed into service. William Winans records that every sermon at White's campground in Amite County, Mississippi, in 1814 was by a different preacher! In spite of long distances and difficult roads a number of ministers usually appeared. In some cases various conferences, quarterly, district or annual, were held in connection with campmeetings and they brought a full attendance of the brethren involved. Bishop Francis Asbury preached at every campmeeting where he had opportunity, as did Bishops McKendree and Roberts. As the years passed and Methodism expanded one finds the names of bishops only occasionally on the roster of preachers. New Prospect campmeeting has had only one sermon by a bishop in its 78 years of history.

From earliest days the Presiding Elder was at almost every camp-

meeting and a necessary part of the program. Since a campground was not always directed by a single pastor, the Presiding Elder usually discharged this responsibility. Along about the turn of the century this custom began to change, and now the District Superintendent probably spends only a single day at the campground as a sort of courtesy visit to show his interest. Certain superintendents with evangelistic reputation do all the preaching in some of the campmeetings.

A fact worthy of notice is that prominent evangelists have not had too much place in the campmeeting. The intensified program makes such demands upon the minister's time and energy that an evangelist, with a year-round program of preaching, could hardly adjust himself to the schedule. The campmeeting's social life and easy-going attitude toward any intense spiritual responsibility would probably cause a sense of frustration in the average evangelist, who centers, as a rule, on achievements that can be numbered and reported.

There are at least four adverse criticisms that have been made about campmeetings, all of them true in some degree. Most commonly heard is the charge that the campmeeting was the center of religious fanaticism. This probably caused the Presbyterians in early days to withdraw almost entirely. The well-known Peter Cartwright gives large place in his account of campmeetings to the element of extreme fanaticism. In his autobiography he says:

"In this great revival the Methodists kept moderately balanced; for we had excellent preachers to steer the ship or guide the flocks. But some of our members ran wild, and indulged in some extravagances that were hard to control. The Presbyterian preachers and members, not being accustomed to much noise or shouting, when they yielded to it went into great extremes and downright wildness, to the great injury of the cause of God."

In connection with the physical phenomenon known as the *jerks* Mr. Cartwright says:

"I have seen more than five hundred persons jerking at one time in my large congregations."

He tells the story of a man whose neck was broken by the jerks. However, Cartwright never saw things with ordinary glasses or even rose-colored glasses but always with magnifying glasses. His autobiography was written many years after the occurrences took place.

We have two first-hand accounts of very early campmeetings, one of them from the pen of Bishop Asbury in November, 1800:

Monday, 20: We came by Manlicks to Drake's creek meetinghouse, at the close of a sacramental solemnity, that had been held four days by Craighead, Hodge, Rankin, McGee and Mr. Adair, Presbyterian officiating ministers; we came in and Brother McKendree preached upon Jer. 4: 14; after him Brother Whatcoat upon 'We know that we are of God.' I also spoke; my subject was The Work of God. Last Sabbath was my birthday. This will make the thirtieth year of my labors in America. It is supposed that there are one thousand souls present, and double that number heard the word of life on Sunday.

Tuesday, 21: Yesterday and especially during the night, were witnessed scenes of deep interest. In the intervals between preaching, the people refreshed themselves and horses, and returned upon the ground. The *stand* was in the open air, enbosomed in a wood of lofty beech trees. The ministers of God, Methodists and Presbyterians, united their labors, and mingled with the childlike simplicity of primitive times. Fires blazing here and there dispelled the darkness, and shouts of the redeemed captives, and the cries of precious souls struggling into life, broke the silence of midnight. The weather was delightful, as if heaven smiled, while mercy flowed in abundant streams of salvation to perishing sinners. We suppose that there were at least thirty souls converted at this meeting. I rejoice that God is visiting the sons of the Puritans, who are candid enough to acknowledge their obligations to the Methodists.

The Bishop apparently did not see in this campmeeting anything offensive to order and decorum.

There was enthusiasm bordering on fanaticism in early campmeetings. This was as much a product of the times as of the occasion. Life was crude and raw on the American frontier and nothing proceeded according to the tenets of a more advanced culture. Even in the campmeetings that came after the War between the States there was a great deal of enthusiasm, much of it harmful to the spirits of impressionable people, but the leaders were in earnest and knew little psychology, which was even more true in pioneer days. My great-grandmother, Elizabeth Goff, walked fifty miles to a campmeeting near Wilmington, N. C., in 1800, at the age of sixteen, and went to the altar, presumably the same night, where she remained until four o'clock in the morning, when she was gloriously converted. No thoughtful preacher would now encourage a sixteen-year old girl to remain at the altar until that hour. Truth compels me to say that my great-grandmother did later lose her mental powers, but actually it was seventy-five years later when she was ninety years of age!

But if religious fanaticism was a characteristic of early campmeetings it is no longer a weakness today, though it may prevail in some of the newer groups that now sponsor the campmeeting idea. So far as Methodists are concerned, it is "gone with the wind" and there seems little prospect of return. The last time the writer heard anybody shout at a campmeeting was in 1927.

An ever-present problem in campmeetings during the first century was lawlessness and, to a lesser degree, immorality. The records are filled with the stories of "lewd fellows of the baser sort" who often created disturbances. Leaf River campground gave this as the cause for folding its tents. But ordinarily those in charge refused to allow lawlessness to hinder the work greatly and they met it with firmness and in most cases it was dissipated. One suspects that the pioneer preacher was not always wise in distinguishing between energy and hoodlunism and sometimes his stern rebuke actually led to greater disorder. Edward

Eggleston in *The Circuit Rider*, tells of a Methodist minister who sternly voiced his disapproval of the conduct of a young man and predicted that the disturber of public worship would land in the penitentiary. To his amazement he met the young fellow at Annual Conference asking for admission on trial. Mr. Eggleston records that the minister voted for his admission but looked disappointed that he had failed in his prediction!

The enemies of the campmeeting have made much of immorality and a book in our historical archives would lead one to believe that the average campmeeting was the scene of orgies of sex and crime. But evidence does not support this. The campmeeting situation does not lend itself to immorality. Where hundreds of people are coming and going and every cottage is filled with people day and night, there was no place for immorality. The forests that surround the grounds usually are filled with people, some engaged in prayer, others in innocent conversation, and others perhaps in less laudable pursuits, such as drinking. The writer has attended campmeetings all of his life and has heard few rumors of immoral practices.

One of the problems affecting every campmeeting has been the expense and how to meet it and whether it was worth the costs. In early days a few wealthy planters apparently fed the people. William Winans records in his journal in 1822, when the Mississippi Conference was held in connection with Bethel campmeeting in Green county, that he was reluctant to accept the hospitality of John McRae, since Mr. McRae was under the necessity of providing hospitality for everybody. Later, as the supporters of campmeetings increased it was possible to share this burden. Up to the War Between the States and even later it seems to have been the custom of providing food if not shelter for everybody who came. (The writer's brother, Professor C. E. Cain of Mississippi State University, slept on pine straw under a tree at Salem campground in Jackson county as late as 1903, along with several others.)

In the poverty-stricken condition of the South after 1865 this was a pressing problem. The practice continued somewhat on the same basis at the rural campgrounds, with simple food supplies shared with those who came. But the railroad and resort campmeetings were faced with a real problem. The tenters themselves came from a distance, often at considerable expense, and were not prepared to offer food and shelter to all. The old order had changed and, instead of great numbers of relatives and old friends, a host of strangers appeared, many of them amply able to support themselves. So there came into being an institution that would now be a restaurant, but it has been known mainly as the public tent, or a place where the public might get food if he had the price. It would hardly be fair to say that this was the point at which the serpent entered Eden, but commercialism, beginning at this necessity, has done much to rob the campmeeting of its primitive spiritual vitality. Coffee, the *sine qua non* of the Deep South, was traditionally weak at camp-

meetings, since the vendor thereof soon discovered that there was greater profit in weak than in strong coffee. One disappointed purchaser of the exceedingly mild beverage, at New Prospect campground in Jackson County, said that he could make coffee as strong by drawing one grain of coffee through Mounger's creek, which has given the name of "Mounger's Creek coffee" to weak coffee in that area.

The problem of feeding was not the only one that confronted the tenters and campground associations, particularly at the resort campmeetings. Land was more expensive at the latter places. Buildings had to be better and were more expensive. The cost of the land on which Seashore Campground was established in 1872 was more than the value of all the property, buildings and grounds, of all the campmeetings in the Seashore District and perhaps in the Conference. The main source of income was a collection on Sunday. But it soon became evident that the same people who were spending money for buildings of their own were also making the largest contributions. Therefore, as a sort of desperate alternative the idea of a gate fee offered a seeming solution. This system is in use at all the Assembly grounds of Methodism today and is accepted as a matter of course. But it was not accepted without controversy in the early '80s and the only two campgrounds that used the plan, Seashore and Crystal Springs, abandoned it. There is some evidence that Palmer Creek campground, twelve miles from Seashore, was established in protest, since the initial announcement stressed the fact that there would be no admission charge and that all comers would be entertained free of charge.

POSITIVE FACTORS IN CAMPMEETINGS

Can any good come out of an institution with so many weaknesses? Unquestionably there can. A person who had never attended a campmeeting would conclude from the records that there are values which will cause it to live and have a permanent place in Methodism at various places. No institution survives the changes of time and circumstances unless it ministers to some real need of the human spirit. Campmeetings, though few in number, have a real place in the affections of thousands of people.

The contribution has been fourfold: Fellowship, evangelism, intellectual and spiritual culture and, for lack of a better word, promotion. Taking these in reverse order, Methodism has gotten before the public better in its campmeeting program than in any other way. A small church might stand by the side of the road and render effective service for a century, as my own home church, Red Hill, has done, and few people outside of the community would know either name or its service. Not so with the campmeeting. Its very nature focused public attention on it and, whether friend or enemy, no person could either ignore it or be unaware of its impact on the community. I do not think it is

accidental that there are no strong churches of other denominations in the immediate vicinity of any of the Methodist campgrounds in Mississippi. At a time when we are studying anew the whole matter of public relations we should not forget that Methodism in the past has gotten much of its best publicity from the campmeetings. Even adverse publicity has focused attention on the church and its work. This is not to imply that the campmeetings have had any great program of publicity; in fact the reverse is true. I know of no institution that blissfully ignores the press and succeeds without it as well as the campmeeting.

The cultural values of the campmeeting have been intellectual, moral and spiritual. Consider for a moment the intellectual impact upon a remote rural community of an annual series of sermons by the best minds. In a conversation about a certain rural school that had sent forty-two young people to college in its brief history of thirty years, an outstanding layman, not a Methodist, gave it as his considered opinion that the preaching at the campground had given insight and challenge to young people of all denominations and resulted in this unusual number that sought a higher education.

The campmeeting has been an instrument also of moral cultivation. Here, for the first time, many a reckless youth, felt the weight of proper authority and left the campground with permanent impressions in favor of law and order. It was but a short step from consideration of the laws of men to the laws of God. In the early days Sunday Schools were few and irregular, preaching was limited by many hindrances, so that even a faithful member of the Church who heard as many as a dozen sermons in a year was fortunate. But in the campmeetings he might hear a dozen in a few days, some of them by the leaders of the Conference. It was a custom a few years ago in the campmeetings of the Deep South to have at least one sermon or address on Methodism, its doctrines and policy. This we are seeking to revive this year of the 175th anniversary of the Christmas Conference.

The evangelistic contribution of the campmeeting is debatable. It is difficult to determine how many came into the church as a direct result of campmeetings but the proportionate number in early days was very great. One must remember that the total membership in those days was small and the addition of a represented a high percentage. For instance the account of Learner Blackman says of the first campmeeting in Mississippi:

"We appointed a campmeeting at Washington in Adams county. It commenced last Friday and ended today. On the Sabbath I suppose it was attended by near two thousand people. I have reason to believe that five were converted and twenty or thirty powerfully awakened at this campmeeting."

Mississippi had less than 75 white members at the time and even fewer colored members. A revival campaign that did as well proportionately today would bring ten thousand people into the church.

Where the population was larger, the number who came into the church from the campmeetings was greater. The record seems to have been established by a circuit in Virginia, where a thousand persons came into the church. This is probably the basis of Bishop Asbury's statement that the campmeeting was the chief source of recruiting the membership in his day. There are no statistics available that would give all the facts, but it seems clear that a great many people came into the Methodist Church directly from the campmeeting during the first half-century of their history. Reports were usually of conversions rather than accessions.

Some meager reports from campmeetings in Mississippi before 1860 give the following figures in this field:

- 1852, Bethel campmeeting, Wilkinson County, 200 accessions.
- Bardwell Springs campmeeting, site unknown, 100 accessions.
- 1853, Bethel campmeeting, mentioned above, 50 accessions.
- Brownsville campmeeting, Hinds county, 250 conversions.
- Carthage campmeeting, Leake county, 52 accessions.
- 1854, Bethel campmeeting, Wilkinson county, 28 accessions.
- Salem campmeeting, Jackson county, 17 accessions.

When campmeetings were revived in Mississippi after the war a new generation had grown up outside the church. We read of rather large ingatherings for a number of years, of which the following are illustrations:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1872 Crystal Springs, | 42 additions |
| Frost Bridge, | 17 additions |
| Salem, | 14 additions |
| 1873 Seashore | 50 conversions |
| Crystal Springs, | 33 additions |
| Paulding, | 36 additions |
| 1874 Seashore, | 60 conversions |
| Paulding, | 55 accessions |
| Crystal Springs, | 120 conversions |
| 1875 Providence, | 25 conversions, 25 accessions |
| 1876 Seashore, | 150 conversions |
| Crystal Springs, | 35 accessions |
| Holland's, | 45 conversions and 35 accessions |
| Providence, | 100 conversions and 40 accessions |
| Salem, | 24 conversions and 20 accessions |

Passing over some years we find the following for the campgrounds:

- 1882 Crystal Springs, 70 conversions, 38 accessions
- Seashore, 60 conversions
- Mounger's Creek, 35 conversions, 21 accessions
- China Grove, 80 conversions
- New Prospect, 40 conversions, 25 accessions
- Topisaw, 50 conversions, 46 accessions

From this time on the campmeetings seem to have operated on the law of diminishing returns, so that by 1900 a relatively small number of members were coming directly from them. Now very few people are

added as a result of such services. The explanation is an easy one. Educational and visitation evangelism, with emphasis on revivals early in the year and membership classes at Christmas and Easter, coupled with some modern aversion to a public profession of faith in large congregations, have resulted in almost no additions to the church through this means.

But there still remains what has always been perhaps the most vital factor and contribution of the campmeetings to the program of the church, namely, Christian fellowship. The pioneer sought the fellowship of the Methodist campground because he was a lonely soul, living his life in comparative isolation from his fellows. Modern man is still a lonely soul in the midst of a crowd, where the pressures of modern life beat heavily upon him. For opposite reasons the pioneer and modern man sought the solace of a cordial and friendly atmosphere, where the cares and responsibilities of a competitive business world were temporarily laid aside and the fellowship of friends and associates of other days were renewed under the hallowed and sacred influences of consecrated ground. The increasing number of family reunions indicates the wide-spread and deep-seated desire for this renewal of fellowship. It is one of the strongest urges of the souls of men and finds one of its best avenues of enjoyment at a campmeeting.

There are certain conclusions that seem clear in regard to this historic institution. Pioneer conditions that brought it into existence have passed away but the campmeeting is with us still and bids fair to be a continuing part of the life of the Methodist Church in many places. It no longer is an agent of intense evangelism, but its other qualities, namely fellowship, intellectual culture, moral and spiritual discipline, and wholesome advertising of the Methodist Church, more than justify its cost of time and money.

THOMAS SCOTT: HIS BOOK

By LAWRENCE SHERWOOD

INTRODUCTION

Thomas Scott (1772-1856) was a man of varied abilities. During his long life he was a Methodist Circuit Rider, a clerk in a dry goods store, a tailor, a Prosecuting Attorney in Kentucky, the clerk of various courts, Secretary of the Senate of Ohio, and Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio. In addition to these positions, Thomas Scott filled various elective and appointive offices in the State of Ohio and for the Government of the United States.

Regardless of his position or residence, Thomas Scott was a fervent Methodist. Thus, persons interested in the early days of Methodism in parts of the following areas will find information in the writings of

Thomas Scott: Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Ohio.

SOURCES

The source for information about Scott that is most commonly known is an article found in James B. Finley, *Sketches of Western Methodism*.

This article was written by Judge Scott himself, and was abridged by his friend Samuel Williams. A second source may be found in the issues of the *Western Christian Advocate*. In many issues Scott gave his reminiscences of his experiences on early Methodist Circuits. The third, and major, source of Scott's Methodist writings is in the manuscript collection of this author.

LIFE

Thomas Scott was born October 31, 1772 at what is now Old Town, in western Maryland. When he was eight years old, as he says, "I for the first time crossed the Alleghany Mountains, in company with my father's family, who contemplated descending the Ohio river the following spring, and settling in Kentucky. . . . On the return of spring, the frontier settlements were often attacked by the Indians . . . which rendered the passage down the river to Kentucky too hazardous to attempt. . . . As the Indian hostilities continued, my father purchased a small farm about two miles from Oldtown, in the Green Spring Valley, Hampshire County, (West) Virginia, on which the family continued to reside till the fall of 1790, when they removed to the west and settled on the head waters of Bracken creek, Mason County, Kentucky."

Before he was fourteen years old he became a member of the Methodist Church. At the Conference in Leesburg, Virginia in April, 1789, he was admitted on trial in the travelling connection.

Scott's service as a full-time Methodist preacher dates from 1789-1796. During this formative period of the Methodist Church he came to know hundreds of people, great and small, who played their respective parts in the early life of this Church. In his manuscript he gives accounts of the lives and relationship of many of these. His appointments are as follows:

- 1789-90 Gloucester Circuit, Virginia
- 1790-91 Berkeley Circuit, Virginia and West Virginia
- 1791-1792 Stafford Circuit, Virginia
- 1791 Fairfax Circuit, Virginia and D. C. (two rounds)
- 1792-1793 Frederick Circuit, Virginia
- 1793 Fairfax Circuit, Virginia (two rounds)
- 1793-1794 Ohio Circuit, West Virginia, Pennsylvania
- 1794-1795 Danville Circuit, Kentucky
- 1795-1796 Lexington Circuit, Kentucky

In the Spring of 1796 his labors as an itinerant ceased. On the 10th of

May in that year he married Miss Catharine Wood and soon settled in Washington, Kentucky. He experienced several set-backs during this period until, at length, he became a successful tailor. While he worked at this trade he had his wife read aloud to him from Blackstone's Commentaries and other law books. With this background he moved to Lexington in the fall of 1798 and commenced a regular course in the study of law.

In April, 1801, he moved to Chillicothe, Ohio, and soon began his public offices in connection with his law training. Among the offices that he held were: Secretary of the Senate of Ohio for several years until 1809; Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio, 1810-1815; Member of the Ohio Legislature 1815 and many years following; Registrar of the Land-Office at Chillicothe, 1829-1845.

Thomas Scott died in February, 1856. In his eighty-four years he had a wide variety of experiences; through all the years, however, he always found time to act as a "supply" in the pulpits of the Methodist Church.

It is our purpose now to bring to light some of the interesting facts from the Scott manuscript. This is a voluminous record—and the problem is one of selection. We will limit our selections to the sections dealing with Virginia and Kentucky.

DESCRIPTION OF PREACHERS

Scott gives vivid descriptions of scores of early Methodist preachers. He gives interesting insights, that can be found nowhere else, of such things as a man's size, build, type of preaching, and personal peculiarities.

For an example, his description of Bishop Francis Asbury tells some things that are not commonly known. This relates to Asbury in the winter of 1790 when Scott was on the Gloucester Circuit in Virginia: Asbury "was now forty-four years of age, about five feet eight inches in height. His bones were large, but not so his muscles. His voice was deep-toned, sonorous, and clear. His articulation and emphasis was very distinct, and his words were always appropriate. His speech was slow, solemn, and impressive. His sermons resembled the lessons of an intellectual parent giving instructions to the children whom he tenderly loved, on subjects in which their interests were deeply involved. His features were distinctly marked, and his intellectual organs were well balanced and finely developed. His hair and complexion, when he was young, were light, and his eyelashes uncommonly long. No one could look upon his countenance without at once feeling that he was in the presence of a great man. His very look inspired awe, veneration, and respect. His general appearance was indicative of a person born to rule. . . . When presiding in conference, unless when compelled to speak, he sat with his eyes apparently closed; but those who attentively noticed his countenance never failed to perceive that his eyes were not closely shut, but were in constant motion, looking through his long eyelashes,

inspecting the countenances of the different members of the conference, so as to form a correct estimate of each. His appeals to the preachers, when it became necessary, for missionaries to be sent to the wilds of the west, were irresistible. When he found it necessary to relax the gravity of his countenance, he would make himself as pleasant and playful as a child. . . .”

Concerning another of the early leaders Scott says: “The Rev. Ezekiel Cooper was about five feet, ten inches in height, yet rather slender for a man of his height. His intellectual organs were well developed and his mind was richly stored with human and divine knowledge so that he was ready and well prepared at all times to bring out of his treasury things new and old. . . . While he was stationed in the city of Alexandria in 1791 he wrote several numbers on the subject of liberty which were published in the city papers, which were highly approved.”

The lives of early preachers were often in danger, particularly on the frontier. Of one who actually lost his life going to his circuit, Scott says:

“In 1790 the Rev. Samuel Tucker and Joseph Lillard were appointed to the Limestone Circuit (Kentucky). The circuit at that time embraced the settled parts of those portions of Kentucky which at the present (1850’s) constitute the counties of Mason, Bracken, Fleming, Lewis, and part of Nicholas. Mr. Tucker was in the Redstone country (Pennsylvania) when he received notice of his appointment to that circuit, and he immediately prepared to set on to the station assigned him. Two family boats being about to descend the river Ohio to Maysville, then called Limestone, he took passage in one of them. The boats were lashed together according to the custom in those days. They descended the river in safety, until, nearing a point about seventy miles above Maysville, they were fired on by a large party of Indians, who were prepared with canoes for boarding. On the first fire part of the men on board were killed, and the rest badly wounded. Tucker fell, being mortally wounded. The Indians in their canoes moved rapidly towards the boats, evincive of an intention to board them, on seeing which, Tucker, who was an excellent marksman, brave and intrepid, requested the women to draw him to a part of the boat where he could take a steady aim at the Indians as they approached, to load and prime the guns as rapidly as possible, and, when loaded and primed, to hand them to him. The women did as requested, and he kept up such a constant, destructive and well directed fire, that the Indians, in the two attempts which they made to board the boats, being each time repulsed with great loss, finally gave up the pursuit. Before the boats reached Maysville, Tucker died of his wounds. The survivors, under God, attributed their deliverance to his prowess. . . .”

CIRCUIT PREACHING-POINTS

Scott is often detailed in naming and describing his circuits. He often

gives the exact bounds of a circuit and continues to name and annotate the families and churches.

As an example, one might look at Scott's account of Gloucester Circuit. There is detailed information about the preaching places as of 1789: "The mansion of Mr. Chapman, situated in a place called Guinea, on the east side of York river, within a few miles of Yorktown . . . a few miles above Chapman's on York river, there was a small society, who were closely united together in the bonds of a peaceful Gospel . . . There was also a large class at a Mr. Guthries, who possessed a handsome estate. . . . There was, also, at the widow Fleming's a large, warm-hearted, zealous society. Her son James, a pious, excellent young man, was then leader. He was a first cousin to the Rev. Thornton Fleming. . . . A sea captain named Billops resided at New Point Comfort, where a large and deeply-pious society had been formed; Captain Billops possessed a handsome estate, used great hospitality, was a member of our Church, a zealous local preacher. . . . Mrs. Davis, who resided on the Bay shore, was the first who opened her house in Gloucester county for the Methodist preachers. . . . Near Hobb's Hole in Essex county, a small class had been formed at the widow Cole's. Mrs. Cole had three sons, each of whom became itinerant ministers in the Methodist Church; namely, Leroy, in 1777; Carter, in 1778; and Caleb in 1781. . . . Near the eastern end of King and Queen county resided two local preachers—Benjamin and John Pace; preaching was held in the dwelling-house of the latter; in 1791 John Pace was admitted on trial as a traveling preacher. . . . In the same county resided Colonel Garard; an excellent class had been formed there. . . . Another of our preaching stations was at the house of a Mr. Ewbank in the eastern end of Caroline county. . . . Three of our preaching-places were in Hanover county; namely, Han-overtown, Newcastle, and the widow Clark's. . . . The Court house at Matthews Court-House. . . . The mansion of the widow Clayton across the Mattaponi river. . . . The circuit, as formed, resembled the figure eight, the lines of which crossed each other at Mrs. Lumpkin's which was regarded as the headquarters on that circuit. . . ."

Scott has the following to say about the Danville Circuit in 1794: "It was situated on the south side of the Kentucky river, and extended from Shawn's run across Dick's river near where it discharges its self into the Kentucky river above Curd's ferry, thence in a zig-zag direction up into the extreme frontier settlement on that river in the then county of Madison, and thence in a serpentine course through Madison, Sinclair, and Mercer counties to the beginning." He then names about a score of homes and other preaching-points, giving personal details, family relationships, and other material of value.

"FIRSTS"

The Scott manuscript give evidence to support priority for several happenings of early Methodism. For example, he brings new light to the

problem of how organized Methodism entered the West through the preaching of Richard Owings in the Redstone country in 1782 or 1783. Again, one interested in knowing the original state of the Stafford Circuit during its very first year of organization can find such a picture in Scott—for he was the preacher there its first year; the same is true of the Frederick Circuit, for Scott was the first preacher after its formation. One interested in the beginnings of Methodism in certain towns finds help from Scott; for example, "Mr. William Bushby, and his first wife were the first Methodists who ever resided in the city of Alexandria, in Virginia. They embraced religion under Mr. Wesley, in Carlisle, England, and united with the Methodist society in that city. Shortly prior to the commencement of the Revolutionary War he . . . settled in Alexandria. . . ."

Methodism in Louisville, Kentucky, had a very inauspicious beginning: "In the fall of 1788, or early in the spring of 1789, Mr. Robert Wood, my wife's father, with his family, descended the Ohio river and settled in Louisville, Kentucky. Mr. Wood was, I believe, the first Methodist who ever resided in that town. Some short time thereafter another Methodist family arrived and settled in the town, when they established prayer and social singing meetings among themselves, and were once or twice visited alternately by the Reverends Thomas Williamson and Wilson Lee. About the same period a young man of gentlemanly appearance who sang well and professed to belong to the Methodist Episcopal Church landed at Louisville and settled in the town. He was received and treated with the respect due to a pious young man of courteous behavior; but in the course of a few weeks news reached them that he was an impostor who had recently broken from confinement and had fled from justice. The young man instantly fled and was never thereafter heard of by them. That circumstance, for a little time, had an injurious effect upon the cause of Methodism in that town. . . ."

Late in 1789 Robert Wood moved from Louisville to Lexington, Kentucky. It was in his home that Bishop Francis Asbury preached his first sermon in that town; the date was May 13, 1790. A guard was placed at the door to keep off the mob.

REVOLUTIONARY WAR

Scott wrote of many other happenings which he had experienced or about which he had heard. In the manuscript are various tales about the period of the Revolutionary War written by a man who was born in 1772. Here is one of those narratives as told to Scott by another Methodist preacher: "Rev. Philip Bruce told me that, during his travels, he made it a constant practice when nearing an encampment of either the Americans, the British, or the Tories, to request an introduction to the officer highest in command. That favor was constantly accorded to him; and on being introduced he informed the officer that he was a traveling Metho-

dist minister, and asked permission to preach to the troops under his command. The favor was never denied him. Mr. Bruce said that at one time he preached to a large encampment of Tories, a little beyond the frontier settlements in South Carolina; some short time after which the commanding officer of the continental troops was informed that the Tories were preparing to make a descent upon a large Whig settlement, and cut them off before they were prepared to make defense. On receiving that information the officer instantly dispatched a strong, armed force, who fell upon the Tories by surprise, killed the greater number of them, dispersed the rest, and broke up their encampment. The British and Tories suspected that Mr. Bruce had communicated the design of the Tories to the commanding officer of the continental troops, and resolved to take him prisoner, and punish him according to the laws of war. One day, when seated on the porch of the house of a friend, a company of British light-horsemen rode up to the gate. One of them dismounted, rushed into the porch, with his sword drawn, seized Mr. Bruce, and swore that he was the individual who had communicated the information above indicated. While they were struggling with each other, a company of American light-horsemen rapidly approached in view. The British troops, who remained seated on their horses, cried out to their companion, 'The rebels are upon us.' He instantly let go his grasp, remounted his horse, and they rode off in full speed, leaving Mr. Bruce to pursue the even tenor of his way."

INDIAN TALES

The Scott manuscript contains many frontier tales of the white man and the Indian. Some of these tales are related to Methodism; others are incorporated simply to preserve them. One of these Indian tales will illustrate the entire group.

"There were two married men, who, in the summer of 1793, resided within a few miles of Lexington. The wife of each of them had a young child, the fruits of their respective marriages. Their homes adjoined; each made his improvements adjoining the line of the other and, in order to avoid expense, the improvements of both were enclosed in one fence. At one of their cabins there were greater conveniences for washing than at the other, and by arrangement entered into between the two families the women agreed to wash together the same day at that place, and that the two families on washing day would dine together. On a certain day when the women were washing together at the stream of water with their infants near them, just as their men had returned home for dinner and were standing near them, a company of Indians shot one of the men dead on the spot and rushed towards them. The surviving husband and one of the women seized hold of the dead man and the washing tub with the clothes in it, and the other woman the two infants and hastened to the nearest cabin at the utmost speed

and just as they were about entering the door the other man was shot dead. The women dragged their dead husbands into the cabin, and also the tub of clothes, each with her infant in her arms, and just as they had closed and barred the door the Indians came rushing against it. The women raised a puncheon in the floor and, in order to protect their infants, deposited them in the potato hole near the hearth and carefully replaced the puncheon. Having in vain used every effort to force open the door in order to gain admittance, the Indians climbed to the top of the chimney which, being perceived by the women, instantly threw into the fire a large quantity of tow and feathers, the flames and smoke of which instantly ascending choked the Indians and compelled them to descend.

"The Indians made repeated attempts to set on fire the roof of the cabin, but the flames were as often extinguished by the persevering efforts of the women. When all of the water and eggs in the cabin were exhausted in quenching the flames they swabbed deep the blood of their dead husbands and therewith quenched them. One of the women on looking through a small crack in the door saw one of the Indians standing just before it. She hastily took down the rifle, placed the muzzle to the crack, instantly cocked the gun, drew the trigger, and the Indian fell dead. Which, being seen by the surviving Indians, they instantly cried out: 'Whooh! Good squaw!,' raised the siege and bore off in haste their dead companion. My wife saw and conversed with the woman who shot the Indian on the following day at the dwelling of her mother in Lexington."

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Among the interesting portions are many experiences of Scott. One reads with interest, for example, of the tale told Scott by Dr. Hinde, a Deist, whose wife became a Methodist; her husband tried to persuade her to leave the Church, and at length covered her with blister plasters to ascertain whether he could not blister religion out of her. Her patience and meekness under this torture convinced him that he too should become a Christian.

Scott tells of his experience with a ferry-owner named Frazier who had sworn that he would whip the first Methodist preacher that he met. In the fight that ensued Frazier grabbed Scott by the nose, which, Scott confessed, "constituted a pretty good handle." The drunk Frazier was overcome, however, when a local preacher named Lee hit him and made him let go of Scott's nose.

One is touched with a different sort of emotion as he reads Scott's account of the way in which his preaching brought about the conversion of Dr. Edward Tiffin in 1791; Dr. Tiffin later was to become the first Governor of the State of Ohio. He and Scott were life-long friends.

CONCLUSION

One could continue almost endlessly bringing examples of interest and information from the Scott manuscript. Our purpose herein has been largely to whet the appetite for historical research among these records so that they may become increasingly more useful.

Negotiations are now underway looking toward the preparation of copies of the Methodist manuscript of Thomas Scott; these copies would then be made available for Methodist, historical and geneological research.

In this way we hope, in part, to fulfill the dream of Thomas Scott who, in his later years, endeavored to record a life-time to tell it to generations following. As Scott himself noted, "there are many interesting facts and circumstances connected with the rise and progress of Methodism . . . which ought not to escape the notice of him who shall hereafter be selected to write the history of the same."

BRITAIN'S GREATEST JOURNAL DISCUSSES "THE JOURNAL AND LETTERS OF FRANCIS ASBURY"

A front-page review from the *Literary Supplement* of the *London Times*

WESLEY'S GREATEST DISCIPLE

The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury. Edited by Elmer T. Clark, J. Manning Potts and Jacob S. Payton. In three volumes, 778pp., 871pp., and 603pp. Epworth Press. £7 10s. the three.

Any realistic assessment of the forces that have made and still make the "American way of life" would have to accept, among them, the Methodist churches. So far as the United States has been made as a Protestant country, so far as it still is a Protestant country, with the possible but doubtful exception of the New England Way, the greatest positive Protestant force has been Methodism. It is not only numerically the most important Protestant body, it is the central Protestant body. There are no regions, not even New England, where it is not powerful. It has not the exclusive doctrine or the list southwards that limits the national appeal of the Baptists. It is not a "class" church like the Protestant Episcopalian or even the Presbyterian churches. It is not tied to a racial minority as, to a high degree, the Lutheran churches are. It is at least as much the representative Protestant church of the United States as the Church of England is the representative non-Roman church in England.

It is, therefore, an event in American historiography when American and English Methodists combine to reprint the single most important "archive" of early Methodist history in America, the *Journal* of Francis Asbury. It has not been reprinted for more than a century and in consequence is not widely available. The Methodist churches are far richer,

have far more members, play a greater part in the national life than they did in 1821 when the *Journal* was first published or even when it was last republished in 1854. And with the greater resources of "the Connexion" it is natural to expect a better edition than that which sufficed for less sophisticated days. That is provided. Indeed, so much trouble has been taken over this new edition that it is ungrateful to carp. The editors have been faced by one obstacle that no learning or ingenuity can overcome. The original manuscript was destroyed by fire in 1836. So a new edition cannot go back to the text, and this is highly regrettable. For Asbury wrote his *Journal* as a contribution to the early history of American Methodism, but it was published, one fears, with no more regard for the absolute authority of the manuscript than Jared Sparks displayed in dealing with Washington's letters. In any case, Asbury probably did not want the kind of text that modern scholarship aims at producing, and the version published in 1821 was doctored to a degree that, without probably doing real injustice to Asbury's manuscript, was not faithful in our modern sense.

All that modern editors can do is to correct obvious errors, provide notes (that is done on the most lavish scale) and, from time to time, hazard an emendation where good sense and probability seem to call for it, as in the case of proper names that can be inferentially restored to some degree of plausibility. But we cannot have and should not grumble too much at not getting a model text like a volume from Mr. Wilmarth Lewis or from the Princeton Jefferson series. This is a work of scholarship so far as it is possible to make it so, but it is above all a work of edification—and that is exactly the order of priority that Asbury would have desired. In another way, the edifying purpose of the edition is made manifest. Each chapter is adorned with a pretty little line drawing showing Asbury on his itineracy. These are edifying but no more, and are sometimes misleading. Thus the drawing of Washington after the British burned it shows the Capitol and the Executive Mansion side by side. That was not so, even in 1814.

If the purpose is edification, has it been attained? Abundantly. Asbury's *Journal* runs from 1771 to 1816. During that time, Asbury must have ridden more than 200,000 miles, over wild and dangerous country, undergoing all the Pauline risks except shipwreck, following most dutifully in the steps of John Wesley. Asbury was conscious of both parallels. He applied to himself the claims of Second Corinthians and, without setting himself up to rival either St. Paul or Wesley, he was ready to note his fatigues and journeyings, if only to rebuke his critics. "I make my calculation upon four thousand nine hundred miles, from July 30, 1801, to September 12, 1802. If a living man and a Christian might dare to complain. . . ." But the next day is the Sabbath and he bursts forth. "Sweet peace fills my mind; and glorious prospects of Zion's prosperity cheer my heart." It was ever so with him to the end. The zeal of the Lord's house ate him up. And it is that zeal which is the chief

testimony given by this book, the chief source of edification to be found in it.

Asbury was a self-educated man and, although he "improved" himself to an astonishing degree, his message was a simple and evangelical one. We see him once pondering the text of the Three Witnesses and noting that its authenticity has been questioned, but with no shaking of his trinitarian faith. We see him in controversy with the Baptists. He was an Arminian in face of Presbyterian and Congregationalist Calvinism: he was for church order in face of the Quakers. But these were side issues. The main business was to save souls by preaching Christ crucified. It is important to notice that Asbury was no modern Latitudinarian. He did not dwell on the terrors of Hell with the morbid delectation of a Jonathan Edwards. But Hell was open for sinners. Salvation was offered but could be refused. The man who was not converted (or "convicted" as Asbury puts it) was refusing salvation. We can see him wrestling with tepid souls, with Laodiceans, with the pagan worldly, even with men striving to love God but not assured of conviction. To Asbury, sudden death, that boon in our modern pagan society, was a dreadful posing of a question far more important than any other. Was the man, the woman, the child thus brought before the throne saved or not? Was the sudden death a judgment? For if Asbury's belief in a guiding and guarding Providence was a comfort to him, it had its alarming converse. The divine hand could cast down as well as save.

It was this conviction that drove Asbury over the mountains to the West, to the dangers of hostile Indians, of drunken Kentuckians, the horrors of bugs and itch, of riding, riding in rain, in snow, of the rejection of the Gospel, of the backsliding of converts. From the western journey he often shrank, but he never broke down. Here we see one of the great social results of Methodism, the bringing to the frontier of the elements of order, morality, self-discipline.

Asbury knew the frontier and, consequently, valued very highly, as a weapon in the Holy War, the camp meeting. He knew, too, the many criticisms that the camp meetings called forth and he knew that not all were unjustified. Scandal needs must be.

"Where the greatest work was—where the greatest number of souls have been convinced and converted to God, there have been the most outcries, tremblings, convulsions, and all sorts of external signs. I took all pains that these might be kept within bounds, that our good might not be evil spoken of."

But when the choice had to be made, at the risk of the charge of "enthusiasm," the work of God must be allowed to go on. He might have quoted "for the word of God is quick, and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

So he promoted the camp meetings, noted with gratification the thousands that came, noted, with less complacency, the often disappointing

number of those converted. And he retorted against the critics of the Methodist, against the formal preachers of a Gospel that did not stir to conversion, that preached mere theology or mere morality. The "feeling part of religion" was what mattered. It is in contemplation of preachers of this type that he gets as near as he ever gets to *odium theologicum*. Sometimes it is conventional Methodist superiority. Reading *Simpson's Plea for Religion* he notes that "the author has drawn aside the purple curtains of the Church of Rome, and the black robes of the antichristian Church of England, to lay bare the abuses of bad systems and the vices of mitred heads." But that is common form compared with his reflections on the tepidity of Philadelphia and the still worse state of New England. There "the priests," living on the compulsory contributions even of Methodists, were a positive obstacle to the spread of the Gospel. The Congregational establishment stuck in Asbury's throat, but his disestablishmentarian zeal may have been made hotter by the limited success he and his colleagues had in New England. Boston was a hard nut to crack (Lynn was much better) but it was Connecticut, "the land of steady habits," that aroused Asbury's ire the most. The very elegance of its church buildings irritated him and still worse was the influence of Yale College. "O, New Haven! thou seat of science and of sin! Can thy dry bones live? Lord, thou knowest!" We know from Timothy Dwight and others that this was a period of spiritual torpor in Yale, but if Asbury thought this of Yale, what would he have thought of contemporary Harvard?

The comparative ineffectiveness of Asbury (and of the Methodist endeavour) in New England is revealing. The New England church polity was too secure; the population too stable (or stagnant); the conviction that "a man who had been born in Boston had no need to be born again" too widespread, for the emotional sin-and-redemption-centered doctrine and mobile but highly integrated system of church government to know the victories it was gaining all the time in the South and West. But the converse of this truth is that the New England Way proved hard to export and that in spite of the zeal of missionaries like "the Yale band," the frontier owed far more to the Methodists than to the children of New England Puritanism.

Asbury in his long life bridged the gap between the English Methodism of Wesley and the autocephalous American church that was so soon to overtake its parent. Unlike Wesley and unlike many of the early missionaries in America, Asbury took the American side in the Revolution. But he knew and suffered from the suspicion of Toryism that hung over the connexion. He knew that American conditions called for American methods. He was full of reverence for the great founder whom he called, with irreverent reverence, "Daddy," but American Methodism could not be ruled from England. Asbury took his rank as bishop seriously—if with some irony, as when he noted that because he was a bishop people thought he must have money to give away when

he had, in fact, \$2 in his pocket and a stipend of \$80 a year. Moreover, as a bishop, he was able to insist on church order, especially against the endlessly troublesome schismatic, James O'Kelly, who, as the editors note, had more success in seducing the faithful into his "Republican Methodist" church than Asbury like to admit—even to his *Journal*.

It is evident that there was an authoritarian strain in Asbury that comes out in his firm and adroit dealings with Bishop Coke. For that good man made the mistake of returning to England for a while. It turned out to be for ever. There is an element of comedy in the more and more desperate efforts of Bishop Coke to get back to America and the skilful evasive action that Asbury took. Here the *Letters* show a side of the bishop not so clearly revealed in the *Journal*. It is easy to see why he had enemies in his own household and it is a pity that more letters have not been found and that so many have had to be taken from printed copies, not from manuscripts. Whatever Coke's personal grievance may have been, it is probable that Asbury was right. Coke had an inadequate idea of American realities. This was shown in his excessively ambitious imitation of Kingswood School, Cokesbury College. If, as the editors suggest, Asbury was relieved when the college burnt down and the burden was lifted, he may well have been right.

Rival bishops, schismatic ministers were not the only errors of the brethren that troubled Asbury. He himself was a celibate. He continually talks of temptation, but we have little light on what these temptations consisted of. But although Asbury appears to have been in love in his youth in England, he put all such things behind him in America. Indeed, as he makes plain in his defense of ministerial celibacy, marriage was incompatible with the kind of life to which he was called. It was unjust to condemn a woman to a marriage that could only be real for a week each year. In his journeyings, Asbury would have found a wife an intolerable burden on his work or on his conscience. And without insisting on celibacy for all his brethren, he yet took a dim view of ministerial marriage. A married minister was lost to the itineracy. He had to be "located." As much as John Wesley, Asbury took the world for a parish and unlike Wesley did not share that parish with a wife. His own standards were so austere, his dislike of the expense of a married ministry was so great (where there were children it could mean a charge of more than \$300 a year!), that one can understand that Conference was not always a place of totally harmonious meeting. It is difficult to see how Asbury could have performed his miracles of endurance and devotion if he had married, although it might be noted that the renowned Peter Cartwright, who was, in many ways, his successor, married young and bred freely. But he did not imitate Asbury's Pauline wanderings!

Asbury would have been the last man to deny that his *Journal* was centered on the one thing needful. At times he is as neglectful of the natural world as St. Bernard, but there are some indications that he

was susceptible to natural beauty. He lived, too, before the days of the social gospel. Indeed, from a modern point of view, we can see something like the contagion of the world's slow stain at work when we watch Asbury's attitude to slavery. The early Methodist testimony against the peculiar institution was almost as firm as that of the Quakers. In one of his few references to the great men of the world, Asbury notes that he learnt from General Washington that he was against slavery, and we read of Methodists emancipating their slaves as a religious duty. But slavery dug itself in. Reading Mungo Park, Asbury wonders whether, given the horrors of African society, the slaves ought not to welcome their enslavement and the chance of salvation. He had too much sense to think that they did. But he has to face the fact that if Methodism is to continue to testify against slavery, to mix its congregations, it will be kept from its evangelical work on the plantations. If the masters are to permit the conversion of their slaves, they must be assured that no dangerous thoughts will be added to or deduced from the gospel message. It was simpler to stress the growing testimony against whisky, enemy of the family, decorum, indeed of life itself on the frontier. It was easier and may have been wiser to welcome independent "African" churches than to insist on white and black worshipping together. But the first step downwards had been taken when scandal came; the slave system and Christian practice came into conflict, and the system won.

The world went through immense changes in Asbury's time, but he remained aloof from most manifestations of the spirit of the age. The Revolution drove him underground for a time, but it plays little part in his *Journal*. The French Revolution is justified as a judgment on "the bloody house of Bourbon." Voltaire was the instrument of divine justice to avenge the Protestant martyrs. But the fall of Bonaparte, like the fall of the Bastille, was not Asbury's business. His was the winning of souls, the peopling of another kingdom. In bringing this great, simple, human but evidently saintly man to life again in his *Journal*, the English and American connexions have done a service to scholarship and to edification. The elaborate notes make the volumes something like a history of early Methodism and it is perhaps being hypercritical to note that the "ordinances" controversy is not discussed till some time after it makes its appearance in the *Journal*, and that not all readers will realize what a scandal it was that the son of Gilbert Tennent should be so conspicuous a sinner. But these are trifles. Asbury rightly has his monument in Washington but the *Journal*, the Methodist churches, are a greater. A remote kinsman, at the height of the anti-clerical wave of the 1920s, published a book called *Up From Methodism*. These volumes show what a great thing it was to come up from or out of—or stay in. Here is the greatest of Wesley's disciples and one of the makers of the United States.

MORE ASBURY LETTERS

This letter was not printed in *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* but was discovered in Lovely Lane Museum since the publication of that volume.

Baltimore, [Maryland]¹

September 15, 1787

To the Friends and Benefactors of Cokesbury College.

I take the earliest opportunity to inform you, that on Saturday, Sunday and Monday, the eighth, ninth and tenth days of December next, we intend, in a most solemn manner, by prayer and holy exercises, to open and set apart our COLLEGE for the uses designed. Our President, the Reverend Mr. HEATH, (whom Doctor Coke hath agreed with to serve us for Sixty Pounds sterling per year, we providing for his family) I have confident expectation will be here before the opening of the College, who, I hope, will display his abilities and diligence greatly to our satisfaction: If he should not come agreeably to expectation, then, to supply his lack of service, that very reverend man Mr. OTTERBEIN has offered freely to visit the College as often as he can, to direct the use of proper books and best plans of education, and to examine the scholars and students, that we may know what improvements they make.

The Reverend Mr. OTTERBEIN was early initiated into *Latin*, *Greek* and *Hebrew*; and it is generally granted that the Germans are as well digested scholars as any on the Continent. —Indeed Mr. OTTERBEIN needs no recommendation as a scholar, Christian and divine; for him to be known is enough.

Mr. MARSH, late student of Yale-College, a very moral and modest man, with considerable knowledge in the *Latin* and *Greek* classics, is engaged at Eighty Pounds currency, per year, and boards himself.

Also Mr. THOMAS HASKINS, educated at Eden-School, on the Eastern-Shore, who was some time a student of law; but being brought under sudden and deep conviction, soon became a zealous and faithful preacher of the Gospel. Mr. HASKINS provides for himself and family for the salary of One Hundred Pounds, currency, per year.

We expect to be not less than Eleven Hundred Pounds in debt when we open this Seminary.

One object will call for our utmost exertions, that is, the finishing the corner rooms and those above them, for the immediate use of the Teachers and Scholars, which will prevent an additional expence in keeping our instructors.—A select number of our friends, having been spoken to, who are willing to take boarders at twenty-three pounds per annum, the education will be seven pounds currency.

All our friends who intend to send their children, are desired to present them at the opening of the College; because, if we are at the annual expence

¹ Date and place appear at end of letter

of five hundred pounds a year to provide Teachers and answer contingencies (and at the same time so deeply in debt) our instructors must have employment.

If such as are described in the plan and address are not to be obtained for Scholars, we must take such as offer and are willing to submit to the rules.

We think ourselves *at present* fully competent to teach the *Latin* and *Greek* Classics; and we shall bring our full plan into execution when we have sufficient room and can procure more money.

All our Friends within an hundred miles may establish a mode of payment once a quarter. Those at the distance of three or four hundred, would do exceeding well to advance for one year's board and education at entrance. I need write nothing on charity. You know our wants. The smallest sums will be thankfully accepted, and most faithfully applied by your brother, friend and diligent servant,

FRANCES ASBURY

BALTIMORE: Printed by William Goddard, in Market-Street.

ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1800

In the General Conference of 1800 an effort was made to strengthen the anti-slavery legislation. Several proposals were made which were voted down. These were "(1) That no slaveholder should be admitted to membership in the Church; (2) that all Negro children born to slaves owned by Methodists after July 4, 1800, should be emancipated at stipulated ages; (3) that every slaveholding member of the Church should free all his slaves, the Quarterly Conference to decide the length of time each slave should serve, unless the laws of the state expressly prohibited emancipation." The General Conference added a rule, "When any travelling preacher becomes an owner of a slave or slaves, by any means, he shall forfeit his ministerial character in our church, unless he execute, if it be practicable, a legal emancipation of such slaves, conformable to the laws of the state in which he lives."

The attitude of the conference was less stringent than the Conference of 1784. An affectionate address to the societies was authorized by the Conference of 1800. In some sections it was welcomed but in others it created great agitation so that Asbury said in his *Journal* "Nothing could so effectually alarm and arm the citizens of South Carolina against the Methodists as the Address of the General Conference," January 30, 1801. See Barclay, *Early American Methodism*, Vol. II, page 82.

[Baltimore, Maryland, May, 1800]

The ADDRESS of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church to all their Brethren and Friends in the United States.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE, the members of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal

Church, beg leave to address you with earnestness on a subject of the first importance.

WE have long lamented the great national evil of NEGRO-SLAVERY, which has existed for so many years, and does still exist in many of these United States. We have considered it as repugnant to the unalienable rights of mankind, and to the very essence of civil liberty, but more especially to the spirit of the Christian religion.

FOR inconsistent as is the conduct of this otherwise free, this independent nation, in respect to the slavery of the Negroes, when considered in a civil and political view; it is still more so, when examined in the light of the gospel. For the whole spirit of the New Testament militates in the strongest manner against the practice of slavery—and the influence of the gospel wherever it has long prevailed (except in many of these United States) has utterly abolished that most criminal part of slavery, the possessing and using the bodies of men by arbitrary will and with almost uncontrollable power.

THE small number of adventurers from Europe, who visit the West Indies for the sole purpose of amassing fortunes, are hardly worth our notice, any farther than their influence reaches for the enslaving and destroying of the human race. But, that so large a proportion of the inhabitants of this country, who so truly boast of the liberty they enjoy, and are so justly jealous of that inestimable blessing, should continue to deprive of every trace of liberty so many of their fellow-creatures equally capable with themselves of every social blessing and of eternal happiness—is an inconsistency which is scarcely to be paralleled in the history of mankind!

INFLUENCED by these views and feelings, we have for many years restricted *ourselves* by the strongest regulations from partaking of “the accursed thing”; and have also laid some very mild and tender restrictions on our society at large. But at this General Conference, we wished, if possible to give a blow at the root to the enormous evil. For this purpose we maturely weighed every regulation which could be adopted within our own society.—All seemed to be insufficient. We therefore determined at last to rouse up all our influence, in order to hasten, to the utmost of our power, the universal extirpation of this crying sin. To this end we passed the following resolution:—

“THAT the Annual Conferences be directed to draw up ADDRESSES for the gradual emancipation of the Slaves to the Legislatures of those states, in which no general laws have been passed for that purpose; that these “Addresses urge in the most respectful but pointed manner the necessity of a law for the gradual emancipation of the slaves: that proper Committees be appointed out of the most respectable of our Friends for the conducting of the business: and that the Presiding Elders, Elders, Deacons and Travelling Preachers, do procure as many proper signatures as possible to the Addresses, and give all the assistance in their power in every respect to aid the Committees, and to further this blessed undertaking. And that this be continued from year to year, till the desired end be fully accomplished.”

WHAT now remains, dear Brethren, but that *you* coincide with us in this

great undertaking, for the sake of God, his church and his holy cause, for the sake of your country, and for the sake of the miserable and oppressed. Give your signatures to the addresses; hand them for signatures to all your acquaintances and all the friends of liberty; urge the justice, the utility, the necessity of the measure: persevere in this blessed work, and the Lord, we are persuaded, will finally crown your endeavors with the wished-for success. O what a glorious country would be ours, if equal liberty were every where established, and equal liberty every where enjoyed!

WE are not ignorant that several of the Legislatures of these States have most generously stepped forth in the cause of liberty, and passed laws for the emancipation of the slaves. But many of the members of our society, even in *those* States, may be highly serviceable to this great cause by using their influence by writing or otherwise with their friends in *other* states, whether those friends be methodists or not.

COME then, Brethren, let us join hand and heart together in this important enterprize. God is with us, and will, we doubt not, accompany with his blessings all our labors of love.

WE could write to you a volume on the present subject; but we know that in general you have already weighed it; and we have great confidence that your utmost assistance will not be wanting, and we promise to aid you with zeal and diligence.

THAT our gracious GOD may bless you with all the riches of his grace, and that we may all meet where perfect liberty and perfect love shall eternally reign, is the ardent prayer of

Your affectionate Brethren,

Signed in behalf and by order of the General Conference,

Thomas Coke,	{	Bishops
Francis Asbury,		
Richard Whatcoat.		

Ezek. Cooper,	{	The Committee
William M'Kendree,		
Jesse Lee.		

Lovely Lane Museum, Baltimore, Maryland

Martin Ruter was returned for his second year as presiding elder of the New Hampshire District. The Baltimore Conference was in session in Baltimore and on Sunday 11, Asbury wrote to Ruter—Asbury reports on the work of the church.

Baltimore, Md.

March 11, 1810

[To Martin Ruter]

My Dear Son:

God be gracious to thee and glorious in the uncoverings of the arm of his power among the people. In all our thinkings and fearings we are com-

forted in the work of God, that we are assured is not in vain in the Lord. Good news from New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and the Old State. Increase about 7,000 in three conferences. This will certainly be the greatest year we have ever known in America, west and south. We go before the wind; in the center we are a little on the lee; we are a little becalmed. We are throwing out the oars, calling in ordinary and extraordinary means, fasting, reforming, dressing our vineyards. Surely, you will not faint now when victory is declared on our side. It is my wish that Bishop McKendree and myself after the Conference should go to Boston. Then I take the shore to Newport, New London, and Genesee. The Bishop takes Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, so on to the Genesee Conference. But we have not had time to deliberate or hardly to speak to each other. I have given him the chair of every Conference. It is time in the thirty-nine years of my labors to wind up. I have retired with great pleasure with a valedictory speech, yet I am willing to do all I can to spread abroad the salt of the earth.

F. Asbury.

Smith, Ernest Ashton, **Martin Ruter**, Methodist Book Concern, N. Y., 1915.

STATEMENT ABOUT THE FRYE AND MITCHEL LETTERS

Three letters written to Christopher Frye and one to Samuel Mitchel have recently come to light. They were discovered by Dr. Wade Hampton and were published in the *New York Advocate*. These were not published in *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*. One is dated August 20, 1812, and two, November 27, 1812. The fourth was published only in part and was taken from Bennett's *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*. The letter was dated September 2, 1811 instead of 1810. The originals of these letters have not come to light, however, each of them is evidently an edited copy presumably done by J. A. Collins, the junior editor of the *New York Advocate*. The Frye letters probably were presented for publication by Frye's widow, Mrs. Margaret Frye.

Found also in the *New York Advocate* is a copy of the letter to Frye on July 23, 1814. This is a much edited copy as a comparison with the original shows. The original is in Lovely Lane Museum. Mr. Collins made 123 changes in this one letter supplying some words and misreading others. Nor is the copy in Volume III, of *The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury* perfect. However, the copy in the *Letters* is more nearly the original than the New York copy. This letter shows the problems of the editor as many edited copies were dealt with and all of the Frye letters published before had been edited, some so polished that they are not Asbury.

The following letter written by Asbury to Christopher Frye is the one from which Bennett took the excerpt. Frye was presiding elder on the Greenbrier District in what is now West Virginia. There are slight differences between the copies in the *New York Advocate* and in Ben-

nett's *Memorials of Methodism in Virginia*. Had this entire letter been available the exact date would have been revealed. The letter mainly deals with reports of the work.

[Pittsburgh]
[September 2, 1811]¹

[To the Rev. Christopher Frye]

My dear Son:

O the grace we need! And what a fulness, if we want meekness more than Moses! Courage like Joshua! faith like Abraham! a spirit of prayer like Jacob! zeal like Paul! O grace! O grace! The superintendency have unshaken confidence in you; yet as we cannot see the district, they wish to hear from you. Our general prospects are good in the states, territories, and provinces, for three thousand miles, north and south; and one thousand from east to west! Gruber and Quinn before the wind for camp meetings! Increase ten thousand this year. Six hundred and sixty-nine *effective* and *defective* men are on our minutes. I think we congregate in America three millions, and our camp and conference meetings, from three to five, to ten thousand in the course of six days. Will you write us to Camden, South Carolina, December 1811?

[Perhaps there may be a struggle in the next General Conference, whether the government shall be presbyterian and local; or episcopal in its small remain. If the poison of electioneering obtains, wo to presiding elders! They are the bishop's men, keep them back; but it will remain to know (what to know) what powers are secured—what the General Conference ceded to the delegated Conference? And if in dismembering episcopacy they will not dissolve themselves and violate the constitution. Bishop M'Kendree may say, "They have made me; let them unmake me." I cannot say so, altogether; if I was made *at all*, by the hand of the Lord and good men, I was made *before they were*—before some forward children were *born*; or *born again*. I cannot cast them off! I cannot do without them, if they can do without me. I must continue in the ship, *storm* or *calm*, near the helm, or before the mast. As long as I can, I will be with them!]²

My forty years expire next month! I am enlisted for life! I never knew how to love the Canadians till I visited them, at the hazard of my life, and the loss of the use of my limbs and health; and never knew how well I loved my children in the states till separated by the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario. I cannot leave you! This will be a glorious fall harvest of ingathering of souls in every state in the union I am, etc.

F.A.

New York Advocate

This letter was written while Asbury was in Maryland at the Widow Willis's. She was the wife of Henry Willis, one of the early preachers. The original of this letter might throw some light on the difficult passages in the letter. Asbury is rehearsing some of the debates which took

¹ Date and place appear at end of letter.

² This excerpt is in Volume III, 438-39.

place in the General Conference of 1812, also some of the difficulties he had had in placing preachers.

[August 20, 1812]¹

[To the Rev. Christopher Frye]

My Dear Frye:

Great grace in this evil day. "The prudent shall keep silence. Wisdom and knowledge, the stability of these times; strength of salvation and the fear of the Lord is his treasure." God hath founded Zion that the poor of his people may trust in it! While I admire the overruling hand of God in our General Conference, I have seen deep-designed policy, which I shall set myself to oppose I do not wish a plan, in a great degree formed and executed by myself, for God, the purest system and purest administration (perhaps) at this time on the face of the whole earth, altered or destroyed! We stand in Jesus, and in the rectitude of our hearts, and indefatigable labors! God be merciful to us, as sinners saved! Why should not the election be as pure as the Gospel we preach! Why not equal each district, a presiding elder and an elder, from the city, *one*, not *three* members? O Rome! O Constantinople! City elders wish to be free—no bishops, but nominal; no presiding elders to oversee. Now we boast an honorable minority. Not like the Genesee. Three never appeared in General Conference. Some said they were afraid. Mr. ————— would choose his own station, but the people desired the bishop to send them a Methodist preacher this year; neither was his administration pure. One located, after going round his circuit four times in the year, and came to General Conference naughty. Many of the presiding elders told the conference of the delegate's neglect of duty. You, as presiding elders, are set for justice, for order, for liberty, and watch for God! And the preachers will watch *you*. Four years hence what, where, may I be on earth, in Europe, in heaven! Our prospects are great, northerly and easterly; a respectable increase in the whole. Good discipline in annual conference in all our troubles. I trust the temple will be built, though in troublous times. Let us hear from you in Charleston, South Carolina, in November or December. Write in time. I am still yours,

F. Asbury,

Now in the sixty-seventh year of my age, and the fifty-first of my appearing publicly to pray and speak for God. Should I be spared and aided to meet the conferences, and ride six thousand miles annually, I wish only to be vice president; and we must help to make stations in confidence, and counsel with the men we approve and appoint.

F.A.

New York Advocate

Asbury was in the eastern part of Tennessee at the time this letter was written. Paint Rock was in adjacent North Carolina. He spent the week end at James Gilliland's. Again he is concerned over the elec-

¹ Date given at end of letter.

tioneeering which had taken place in reference to the General Conference. The preacher referred to here as Tuman is listed in the minutes as Turman.

[Near Paint Rock]

[November 27, 1812]¹

[To the Rev. Christopher Frye]

My Dear Son in the Faith:

Yours came safe to hand. We see eye to eye. Alas! they call themselves the obnoxious conferences, that joined the electioneering plan, and call upon me to be a mediator; but I warned them against the measure; and it was only a small majority that was in the condemnation of electioneering. If our constitution be injured. wo, wo, wo to us. Every friend to it ought to look out in time. We are come again from the west, bringing our sheaves. In both conferences we have stationed preachers, about one hundred and twenty-four or five. Numbers in both increase about 12,000. We have anticipated a conference next year in Mississippi: then we shall make a complete continental circuit of 6000 miles. We have been able to make out this year 5000. Is father Otterbein dead? Great and good man of God! an honor to his Church and country; one of the greatest scholars and divines that ever came to America or was born in it. Alas, the chiefs of the Germans are gone to their rest and reward—taken from the evil to come. I am unspeakably happy in the presidency of Bishop M' Kendree in the conferences, and the stationing. I retire with prudence. I must repose great confidence in, and expect great help from the presiding elders. They must be my committee of information, council, and safety. Be prepared: after all I submit the whole plan to our president. O brother could I boast of fidelity and holiness as of time and labors! From 15 years of age to 68 I have been trying to do for myself and others. I have entered my 42nd year since October. It is a work to correspond with 55 presiding elders once or twice a year, and be seated in 9 or 10 conferences, and trip six thousand miles annually.

I am happy to inform you that we have had great order and union in our western conferences; yea, I hope the turbulent spirit will be cast out of the church universally. We have had some Presbyterian scribbling that our local ministry are preparing to meet. I think you should try to compose a historical letter from the Greenbriar district. O, Brother, preach warmly upon sanctification, to give believers a start for glory! We have not had the difficulties we might have feared in the west; some families have been killed by savages. Our preachers kept their ground in danger. Jacob Tuman intended going to the Methodist family that night, but Providence changed his mind and saved his life.

F. Asbury

New York Advocate

The next letter is one to Samuel Mitchel, Asbury's old friend, who lived not far from Lynchburg, Virginia, until he went west. He was a local preacher. It is not clear where he lived. Tombeakbee is called Tombeckbee in the *Minutes* but is usually Tombigbee. Asbury was at

¹ Date and place appear at end of letter.

the same place, or near where he wrote the letter above "near Paint Rock." They were both written on the same day but he has French Broad on this.

[French Broad]
[November 27, 1812]¹

[To the Rev. Samuel Mitchel]
My Dear Samuel Mitchel:

Great Grace attend thee, as a Christian, a minister, a father in the Church of God, and thy family. Your disinterested labors for, the benedictions to the Church and ministry, shall meet with a gracious and glorious reward. Faint under the toil, temptation, and care of souls! 200,000 people in fellowship! help Lord, for godly men cease, the faithful fail among the children of men! As we are forming and completing our continental circuit, the Atlantic on the east, St. Lawrence and lakes on the north, on the west Ohio and Mississippi; on both sides these waters from Natchez, New Orleans, Pearl river, Tombeakbee, then to the south of Georgia. We cannot travel in the interior. We feel that without the powerful arm of government we shall not succeed well. Alas, the days of visitation are come! Israel shall know it. And this is the third war in America since my birth. When I first came to this country I had not a distant thought either of revolution, or of continuing to my 42d year in this land. My thought was to serve a mission of five or six years and return, but the revolution kept me on the continent. As to what hath taken place, it is what I have feared for years past, and have been preparing for it. O may we be hidden in the day of adversity! The name of the Lord is a strong tower. We will enter into the chambers of Divine protection till the indignation is over past. O, let us watch, fast, preach, and pray; the wall of the spiritual temple shall be built in troublesome times. Peace to thy spirit. Yours,

F. Asbury

New York Advocate

¹ Date and place appear at end of letter.

NEWS OF METHODISTS AROUND THE WORLD

1959 is the 100th anniversary of Methodism in Finland. One of the first events of the centennial year was a church dedication in the coastal town of Lovisa, on the Baltic Sea. The new church serves Swedish-speaking Methodists. Finland has two Annual Conferences—one the Swedish-Finnish Conference and the other the Finnish-Finnish Conference.

Conversations between Lutherans and Methodists in Norway may be held to discuss possible bases for union. Jacob B. Natvig, director of the home missions organization in Oslo is a proponent, and he points out that Lutherans and Methodists there have as much in common doctrinally as Anglicans and Presbyterians in England and Scotland. Other observers in Norway do not agree.

At Sydney, Australia, the Rev. Alan Walker has started a television program titled, "I Challenge the Minister." In an unrehearsed program he stands before a studio audience from all sections of the community and is questioned on religious, moral and social topics.

Superintendent Adam Hecker and former Superintendent Janos Szecey, of the Methodist Church in Hungary participated in the dedication of a new prayer room for the congregation in Szakly. For two years previously the congregation had been meeting in a leased room.

The Rev. Grant A. Schockley, recently appointed a professor at Garrett Biblical Institute, will be the first Negro to serve as a full-time faculty member in any theological seminary of Methodism in the United States except Gammon, which serves the Central Jurisdiction.

The Rev. Frederic Greeves, principal of Didsbury College, Bristol, England, is to be the Cato lecturer in Australia in 1960. The lectureship was established in 1942 by Fred Cato, with the stipulation that the lecturers "were to be persons of distinction in Methodism in some country other than Australia."

Methodists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists work together in the United Church in North Australia, which has been called "the great new fact of the inland." "They are pooling their distinctive characteristics in one fine ecumenical group," says Rev. Fred McKay, superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission.

On January 1, the Holiness Movement Church of Canada united with the Free Methodist Church of North America. The holiness group is Methodist by tradition, originating in Ontario in a revival during the last part of the 19th century.

Capt. Leroy G. Cooper, Jr., a Methodist layman, may be the first United States pilot to orbit the earth in space. He is one of the seven test pilots chosen by the government for special training to fly in the first manned satellite that will be sent aloft in about two years.

When an unannounced census was taken of Methodist churches in the Scandinavian countries, results showed more than 40,000 persons

in attendance. The count was taken at Good Friday and Easter services. Methodist membership in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden is less than 30,000.

As one means of overcoming the severe shortage of Methodist ministers in the United States, the General Conference ordered two new seminaries to be established, to bring the number to twelve. Presidents have been named, faculties are being chosen, and the schools will open soon—one at Kansas City, Missouri, and the other at Delaware, near Columbus, Ohio.

Korean Methodists, who have established 250 new congregations since 1953, are expecting to organize another 250 within the next four years. Since the end of the Korean war, some 47,000 members have contributed more than \$650,000 for church construction and repair.

There are 14,000 Methodist churches in the United States that are not in The Methodist Church, which itself has almost 40,000 houses of worship. If these Methodist churches and parsonages were placed side by side, allowing 200 feet for each church and 50 feet for each parsonage, they would extend, without a break, for 2,537 miles. It would take a tourist a week to pass them, driving eight hours a day at 45 miles per hour.

Mr. J. Ernest Wilkins, distinguished Negro attorney and U. S. government official, has passed away. He recently relinquished his post as Assistant Secretary of Labor to become a member of the Civil Rights Commission. He was chairman of the Judicial Council of The Methodist Church and a member of the World Methodist Council and its World Executive Committee.

Bishop John Branscomb, of the Jacksonville Area of The Methodist Church, U.S.A., has recently died. He was in charge of the Florida and Cuba Annual Conferences and a member of the World Methodist Council. His Cuba work has been assumed by Bishop Roy H. Short and Bishop Arthur J. Moore has taken over the Florida Conference.

A woman, the Rev. Louise Long, has been endorsed by the Commission on Chaplains in the United States, which has 576 chaplains on active duty in the armed forces, in hospitals and prisons. She is chaplain of the state hospital at Modesto, California.

Hollywood, long known for its divorces and broken families, had a refreshing view when the First Methodist Church in the entertainment capital had a golden-wed service. Forty-five couples that had been married 50 years were honored.

Leaders of the Methodist Church in Malaya are exploring the possibilities of mergers with other Protestant denominations. The recent Annual Conference set up a Faith and Order commission to discuss church union with others.

More than 2,000 persons made first decisions during a three-month evangelistic campaign held by Methodists in Elisabethville, Belgian Congo. Some 4,000 visits to the homes of non-Christians were made in

a program that included personal evangelism, prayer evangelism and preaching evangelism.

The 51 bishops of the Methodist Church in the United States met recently with Senators John Kennedy and Hubert H. Humphrey, two possibilities for nomination as President to succeed Eisenhower. The episcopal leaders interviewed other government figures during the semi-annual session of the bishops' council in Washington.

Methodist Bishop Mongal Singh, of Bombay, India, is one of the leaders at the interdenominational pastors' conference being conducted throughout Asia this summer. The meetings are intended to "concentrate head-on spiritual opposition against rapidly growing menaces to Christianity in the Orient," according to World Vision, Inc., sponsor of the conferences.

Florida Southern College, Methodist-related at Lakeland, Florida, is featured in a display of American architecture being exhibited in Moscow.

Section XIII of the World Methodist Council and the Association of Methodist Historical Societies have published a beautiful little booklet on "Thomas Coke, the Foreign Minister of Methodism," written by the Rev. Warren Thomas Smith of Atlanta, Georgia. Copies may be secured free from the American office of the Council at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, U.S.A.

Bishop Sante Uberto Barbieri's new book, *Una Extrana Estirpe de Audaces*, first printed in a 10,000 Spanish edition, is being printed in Italian in Italy and Portuguese in Brazil. It contains lectures delivered at the Noldensian Seminary in Rome and which were prepared in the library of the World Methodist Building at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, U.S.A.

For the first time in its 102-year history, Newark Annual Conference, contiguous to New York City, has received a Negro congregation. The Galilee Church, Englewood, N.J., has transferred from the Delaware Conference of the Central Jurisdiction.

On tiny Yaeyama island, 250 miles south of Okinawa, Protestants have dedicated their first church building. It has 130 members and is related to the United Church of Christ, of which Methodism is a part. American Methodists helped finance the building.